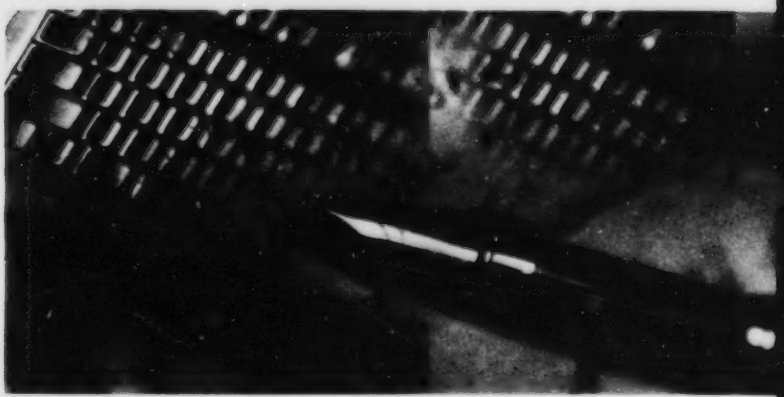
RESEARCH REPORT

AGING TENANTS IN THE PRIVATE RENTAL MARKET



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AGING TENANTS IN THE PRIVATE RENTAL MARKET

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PURPOSE

This report was funded by CMHC's External Research Program in 1997. The objective of the project was to identify how the owners and landlords of private rental buildings are responding to the changing needs of aging tenants. An additional objective was to identify programs delivered by provincial and municipal agencies that assist aging tenants in some way, either in publicly financed housing developments, privately financed and operated housing developments, or both.

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Abstract: Aging Tenants in the Private Rental Market

This report presents the results of a research study designed to find out how owners and landlords of private rental housing are addressing the changing needs of their aging tenants. It reports on the results of a literature review on the subject matter, and then based on the findings of 25 case studies carried out in a number of housing projects in Vancouver, Victoria, and Winnipeg, discusses the willingness and capability of landlords in these projects to respond to the changing needs of their aging tenants. The report also describes the initiatives they have taken to respond to these changing needs.

100-07405

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a case study analysis undertaken in Vancouver, Victoria, and Winnipeg of privately owned and operated rental buildings occupied by a significant concentration of aging tenants. The focus of the research project was four-fold:

- to conduct a review of the literature focused on aging tenants in the private rental market;
- to assess, via a series of case studies, the willingness and the capability of private landlords in Vancouver, Victoria, and Winnipeg to respond to the needs of their aging tenants;
- to identify and describe initiatives that have been undertaken in the private and public rental sectors across Canada to accommodate the needs of aging tenants; and
- to describe measures that may help landlords address the needs of aging tenants.

Because of budget limitations, the study did not survey tenants, but such a research project would clearly be very useful. Given the fact that by 2006, less than a decade from now, almost one-quarter of Canada's population will be over the age of 55,[1] and given the additional fact that about one-third of seniors rent, it will be important to continue widening the body of knowledge on this issue. The literature review in Chapter Two of this report indicates that very little research has been undertaken on the subject to date.

Twenty-five case studies were undertaken – eleven in Vancouver, eight in Victoria, and six in Winnipeg. On average, 62% of the tenants in the case study buildings were over the age of 55. Reflecting the fact that very little new rental construction has occurred in Canada in the last 25 years, the average age of the case study buildings ranged from just under 20 years in Winnipeg to just over 25 years in Vancouver.

As the case study results indicate, almost all the private sector landlords recognize and accommodate the needs of their tenants as they age. Measures taken by landlords to address the needs of aging tenants include such items as making physical modifications to apartment units (for example, installation of grab bars in bathrooms), providing special services such as transportation to doctors' appointments, and recognizing that social needs are important (by providing easy chairs, books, and other amenities in laundry rooms for example).

[1] CMHC, The Long-Term Housing Outlook, 1991-2016, page 14.

These sorts of features and services were common in the case study buildings – very few did not provide any sort of tangible recognition that many or most of their tenants were becoming increasingly frail. Most landlords had also experienced the necessity of moving tenants out of their buildings into accommodation where more services were available (although one in fact experienced the reverse, with a tenant moving back in from a care home because of loss of privacy), and in most cases such movements appear to occur fairly smoothly.

The study found two reasons for the positive attitudes of landlords. The first is that seniors are typically regarded as near-perfect tenants: they pay their rent on time, they take good care of their units, they do not move often, they are quiet. Even those managers who mentioned negative characteristics of senior tenants, usually related to what the managers considered an excessive propensity to complain about things, much preferred senior tenants to non senior tenants.

But another part of this attitude is quite clearly altruistic in nature. Many managers obviously were genuinely concerned about their aging tenants, frequently invoking the thought of their own parents to explain their feelings. It appears quite evident that aging tenants in the private rental market are, generally speaking, well served by the managers of the buildings they live in. A comparison between aging residents living in condominiums or single family homes on the one hand, and those living in private rental buildings on the other, might very well conclude that from the perspective of living in a supportive environment, renters are better off than owners.

In most places in Canada, private landlords are basically on their own when it comes to dealing with the diverse needs of their aging tenants. Public agencies in many provinces have become very active in recent years in terms of addressing the needs of aging tenants in the publicly owned and administered housing stock, but in the private rental sector, public initiatives are usually limited to rent supplement programs or to the provision of home care or continuing care services to individuals living in these buildings. Often landlords take the initiative in alerting tenants or their families to the existence of and need for such services. With few exceptions, there is no co-ordinated effort to address the needs of private sector landlords dealing with aging tenants. Some of these exceptions are described in Chapter Four of this report.

In terms of providing support to private sector building managers, the study found that the development and distribution of a resource directory or guide was not a feasible idea for a variety of reasons. Most managers prefer more immediate tools, such as telephone access to the local health unit (or whatever agency provides continuing or home care services for seniors). Even where more elaborate structures exist, such as organized networks of neighborhood landlords, many landlords in the private sector seem to avoid them, although it is not clear why.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce rapport présente les résultats d'une étude de cas portant sur les ensembles locatifs des propriétaires-exploitants privés, et occupés par un nombre important de locataires âgés, qui a été réalisée à Vancouver, à Victoria et à Winnipeg. Voici les quatre objectifs du projet de recherche :

- étudier la littérature qui porte sur les locataires âgés dans le marché locatif privé;
- évaluer, par une série d'études de cas, si les propriétaires-bailleurs de Vancouver, de Victoria et de Winnipeg ont la volonté et disposent des ressources nécessaires pour répondre aux besoins de leurs locataires âgés;
- relever et décrire les initiatives mises en oeuvre dans les secteurs locatifs public et privé au Canada en vue de répondre aux besoins des locataires âgés;
- décrire les mesures qui pourraient permettre aux propriétaires-bailleurs de répondre aux besoins des locataires âgés.

En raison de contraintes budgétaires, aucune enquête n'a été effectuée auprès des locataires, mais un tel projet de recherche serait certainement d'une grande utilité. Compte tenu du fait que d'ici à 2006, soit dans moins de dix ans, presque le quart de la population canadienne aura plus de 55 ans[1], et qu'en plus, environ le tiers des aînés sont locataires, il serait important de parfaire nos connaissances à ce chapitre. L'analyse de la littérature qui figure au chapitre deux de ce rapport nous permet de constater que peu de recherches ont été réalisées, jusqu'à maintenant, sur le sujet.

Les études de cas ont porté sur vingt-cinq ensembles locatifs, dont onze à Vancouver, huit à Victoria et six à Winnipeg. En moyenne, 62 % des locataires habitant les ensembles étudiés avaient plus de 55 ans. L'âge moyen des ensembles variait entre un peu moins de 20 ans à Winnipeg et un peu plus de 25 ans à Vancouver, ce qui reflète bien le fait que très peu de mises en chantier d'ensembles locatifs ont été entreprises au cours des 25 dernières années.

Comme le démontrent les résultats de l'étude de cas, presque tous les propriétaires-bailleurs d'ensembles privés tiennent compte des besoins de leur locataires âgés et répondent à ces besoins. Pour ce faire, ils ont notamment apporté des modifications physiques aux logements (par l'installation de barres d'appui dans la salle de bains, p. ex.), fourni des services spéciaux (comme des services de transport chez le médecin), et organisé des activités récréatives afin de combler un besoin important chez les aînés (en fournissant des fauteuils, des livres et d'autres commodités dans la buanderie, p. ex.).

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[1] *Perspectives à long terme du logement : Augmentation des ménages au Canada et dans les provinces, 1991-2016,*
SCHL, p. 16.

Dans les ensembles étudiés, de telles commodités étaient généralement offertes; seul un petit nombre d'ensembles ne tenaient aucunement compte du fait que plusieurs, ou même, la majorité de leurs locataires étaient en perte d'autonomie. La plupart des propriétaires-bailleurs ont également déjà dû transférer des locataires dans des immeubles offrant davantage de services (bien que dans un cas, l'inverse se soit produit, alors qu'un locataire est revenu habiter un immeuble parce qu'il estimait ne pas avoir suffisamment d'intimité dans la maison de santé où il avait été transféré), et dans la plupart des cas, de tels transferts semblaient se dérouler sans heurts.

L'étude a permis de découvrir les deux principales raisons pour lesquelles les propriétaires-bailleurs avaient une attitude positive à l'égard de leurs locataires âgés. D'abord, ils considèrent les aînés comme étant des locataires presque parfaits, puisqu'ils paient leur loyer à temps, font attention à leur logement, ne déménagent pas souvent et sont tranquilles. Même les propriétaires-bailleurs qui ont tenu des propos négatifs à l'endroit des locataires âgés, surtout en ce qui a trait à leur propension à se plaindre, préféraient ces derniers à leurs autres locataires.

L'autre raison est purement altruiste. Plusieurs gestionnaires d'immeubles se préoccupent réellement de leurs locataires âgés, invoquant souvent leurs propres parents pour expliquer ce sentiment. Il semble très évident que les locataires âgés dans le marché locatif privé sont, d'ordre général, bien traités par les gestionnaires d'immeubles. Une comparaison des résidents âgés habitant des logements en copropriété et des maisons individuelles d'une part, et de ceux habitant des ensembles locatifs privés d'autre part, pourrait bien démontrer que les locataires jouissent d'un meilleur cadre de vie que les propriétaires.

Dans la plupart des régions du Canada, les propriétaires-bailleurs privés n'ont droit à aucun soutien pour les aider à répondre aux différents besoins de leurs locataires âgés. Par ailleurs, les organismes publics de plusieurs provinces travaillent activement, depuis quelques années, à répondre aux besoins des locataires âgés qui habitent le parc de logements publics, alors que dans le secteur locatif privé, les initiatives gouvernementales se limitent généralement à des programmes de supplément au loyer ou à des soins à domicile pour les personnes qui habitent ces immeubles. Il revient souvent aux propriétaires-bailleurs d'informer leurs locataires ou la famille de ces derniers de l'existence et du besoin d'avoir recours à de tels services. À quelques exceptions près, il y a une totale absence d'efforts concertés visant à répondre aux besoins des propriétaires-bailleurs du secteur privé, qui doivent composer avec des locataires âgés. Certaines exceptions à cet état de fait sont décrites au chapitre quatre du rapport.

Pour ce qui est d'offrir un appui aux gestionnaires d'immeubles privés, on indique dans le rapport que l'élaboration et la distribution d'un répertoire ou d'un guide des ressources n'était pas réalisable, pour différents motifs. La plupart des gestionnaires préfèrent disposer de services immédiats, comme l'accès téléphonique au service local de santé (ou à tout organisme offrant des services continus ou des services de soins à domicile pour les aînés). Même lorsqu'ils ont accès à une structure plus élaborée, comme à des réseaux organisés de propriétaires-bailleurs de quartier, plusieurs propriétaires-bailleurs du secteur privé ne semblent pas y avoir recours, bien qu'on ignore pourquoi.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This report was funded by CMHC's External Research Program in 1997. The objective of the project was to identify how the owners and landlords of private rental buildings are responding to the changing needs of aging tenants.

Many provincial and municipal housing agencies have been grappling for years with the complex issues associated with aging tenants living in buildings designed for younger and stronger people. Ameliorative actions range from retrofitting (even to the extent of installing elevators in some cases); to coordination of social service delivery to tenants; to initiating meal programs. Although daunting challenges remain, and in fact are likely to increase in number and complexity, many public owners have recognized and responded to the challenges.

The situation in the private rental market is much less clear. Private landlords do not generally operate buildings designed exclusively for seniors, as public landlord do, but in many neighborhoods in many centres in Canada, buildings that once housed a variety of ages are now disproportionately occupied by seniors. This trend will inevitably continue. By 2006, less than a decade from now, almost one-quarter of Canada's population will be over the age of 55.[2] One result of that unavoidable fact is that renter households will account for a steadily increasing proportion of household growth.[3]

The Dimensions of the Situation: Key Facts

The Census data and Census-based forecasts[4] summarized in Table 1.1 give some sense of the numerical dimensions of the issue:

Table 1.1 – Senior (55+) Renters in Private Households, Canada

Year	Number of Senior Households	Number of Senior Renter Households
1961	1,427,800	341,600
1971	1,931,500	587,500
1981	2,609,600	837,300
1991	3,302,600	985,100
1996	3,655,000	1,027,000
2006	4,789,000	1,345,000
2016	6,461,000	1,788,000

[2] CMHC, The Long-Term Housing Outlook, 1991-2016, page 14.
[3] Ibid, page 19.
[4] Forecasts from Urban Futures Institute, Housing Canada's Seniors in the Next 30 Years, January, 1999.

The number of senior renter households is going to almost double in less than 20 years, from today's 1 million households to a total of 1.8 million households in 2016. Little is known about this universe, as Chapter Two (Literature Review) will suggest. Senior households that rent in the public or non-profit sectors have been subject to some scrutiny in some provinces (see Chapter Three)[5], but to the knowledge of the authors, virtually no analysis of aging tenants in Canada's private rental sector has been undertaken. Given that less than a decade from now almost one-quarter of Canada's population will be over the age of 55,[6] and that a majority of unattached senior individuals rent,[7] such an analysis is overdue.

1996 Census Data

Readily available data from the 1996 Census[8] indicate that in the country as a whole, fewer seniors[9] than non-seniors rent. However, the proportion of senior renters increases directly with age as Table 1.2 illustrates. Women are also much more likely to be renters than men, in every age group.

Table 1.2 – Households by Age Group and Tenure (Percent)

Age Group	Total Households	Male Headed Households	Female Headed Households
Total Households	100	100	100
Owners	64	71	50
Renters	36	29	50
55-64 Total	100	100	100
55-64 Owners	79	80	63
55-64 Renters	21	20	38
65+ Total	100	100	100
65+ Owners	68	79	58
65+ Renters	32	21	44

[5] There are several reports dealing with aging in place issues in public and non-profit housing (for example, Aging in Place, published by CMHC and the Nova Scotia Department of Housing; Aging in Place: Needs and Realities in Ottawa-Carleton, published by the Council on Aging of Ottawa-Carleton; Development of a Service Co-ordination and Tenant Support Model for Seniors, published by the Ottawa-Carleton Housing Authority).

[6] CMHC, The Long-Term Housing Outlook, 1991-2016, page 14.

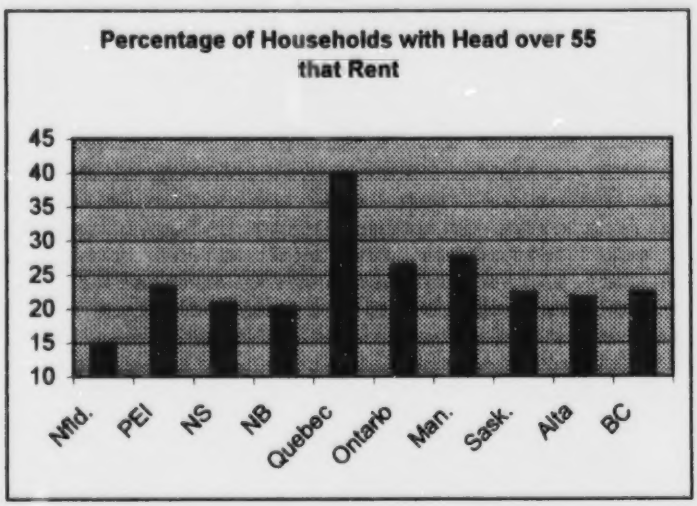
[7] Statistics Canada, A Portrait of Seniors in Canada, Catalogue #89-519-XPE, February, 1997.

[8] This report does not include an analysis of data that would be available on a custom tabulation basis from the Census, nor are we aware of the existence of any other reports based on Census data pertaining to senior renters in private households.

[9] Defined in this report as those aged 55+.

The proportion of senior renters varies quite widely across the country, as the chart below indicates, from a low of 15 percent in Newfoundland to a high of 40 percent in Quebec. The other provinces, with the minor exceptions of Ontario and Manitoba, are very similar in terms of the tenure profile of their seniors.

Chart 1.1: Percentage of Households with Head over 55 that Rent



The Rental Stock

The other dimension of this issue of course is the state and the nature of the private rental stock itself. The level of new private rental production in Canada has been at extremely low levels throughout the past decade in spite of significant reductions in interest rates over the last several years. In addition, there are increasing concerns about the condition of the private rental stock, most of which was built over 25 years ago. Although governments could take steps to address these concerns, they have appeared reluctant to do so. What this means is that not only the tenants, but the buildings themselves are aging. As illustrated in the preceding charts and graphs, the rental stock is a major source of accommodation for elderly tenants. The implications of increasing numbers of elderly tenants searching for declining stocks of rental accommodation are rather disquieting and deserve further scrutiny.

Given such a context, the focus of this research project has been three-fold: to identify and evaluate initiatives that have been undertaken in the private rental market across Canada to accommodate the needs of aging tenants; to assess the willingness and the capability of private landlords in selected other centres (Vancouver, Victoria, and Winnipeg) to respond to the needs of their aging tenants; and to describe measures that would help landlords address the needs of aging tenants. Some measures that public landlords have taken to address the needs of aging tenants have also been included in the report.

Methodology

In order to identify the measures that public and private landlords across Canada have introduced to assist aging tenants in the public, private, and non-profit sectors, ministries of housing and health in all provinces were asked to provide information about any initiatives they had undertaken relative to the stock they own and/or manage, and about any initiatives they were aware of in the private rental market. They were also be asked to provide a summary of landlord and tenant legislation in their jurisdiction as it applies to tenants having difficulty living independently. These initiatives are described and summarized in Chapter Three.

The willingness of private landlords in the three case study cities (Vancouver, Victoria, and Winnipeg) to respond to the needs of their aging tenants was determined by means of personal interviews undertaken by the senior researchers. Twenty five case studies were completed: eleven in Vancouver, eight in Victoria, and six in Winnipeg. Interviews took place on site and generally included a tour of the buildings and some of the units. An interview guide developed in concert with CMHC was used to ensure consistency of results among case studies. Interviews and building tours typically required two to three hours. Because of budget limitations, it was not possible to obtain the views of tenants themselves.

Further detail about the methodology associated with this step of the workplan as well as the results of the case study interviews are discussed in Chapter Four.

Lastly, the study was intended to identify and describe measures that would help private landlords deal with the needs of their aging tenants. The major tool was anticipated to be the development of a resource directory. Although Chapter Five does contains a list of suggestions for private landlords dealing with aging tenants, it does not include either a directory or the format for a directory. As Chapter Five explains at some length, one of the study's findings was that the production of resource directories is an expensive and difficult undertaking that is not generally viewed as either necessary or desirable by managers.

Limitations

The limitations of our study should be clearly understood from the outset. In no respect was the study intended to be a statistically reliable representation of aging tenants in the private rental market or their landlords, although we strongly support the undertaking of just such a study. Rather, it was intended more as an introduction to the subject, a subject about which surprisingly little is known.

The question of how representative our 25 case studies are is impossible to answer. The case studies were identified on the basis of advertisements in Rental Guides and newspapers that included phrases such as "Seniors Welcome" or "Seniors Rent Reductions" or "Organized Activities for Seniors", or on the basis of the researchers' knowledge about local housing markets.

Generally speaking, owners and landlords were willing to cooperate in the study – there were few outright refusals. That fact may suggest that the case studies are somewhat representative of all or at least many private rental buildings that cater to seniors.[11]

Although a formal hypothesis was not part of the study, the authors, perhaps somewhat cynically, expected that the general attitude of private sector landlords to their aging tenants would be one of indifference, by and large. Quite to the contrary, the case studies discovered that most landlords were very concerned about their aging tenants and often went out of their way to accommodate their needs. However, other industry observers do not have quite this benign a view of private landlords, which may mean that our sample was not entirely representative.[12]

Truly representative or not, we believe that our study provides a useful first view of the attitudes of private landlords to the needs of their aging tenants. We also believe that it lays the groundwork for future studies and suggests some promising avenues for further exploration.

Following this introductory chapter, the study comprises five additional chapters and an appendix, organized as desribed below:

Chapter Two:	Literature Review
Chapter Three:	Case Study Analysis
Chapter Four:	Provincial and Muncipal Initiatives Supporting Aging Tenants
Chapter Five:	Tools for Managers
Chapter Six:	Conclusions

Appendices

[11] On the hypothesis that bad landlords would be less willing than good landlords to participate in the study.
[12] For example, an organization in the West End of Vancouver that exists solely to provide information and networking to private landlords (SWEL) is able to attract only a tiny fraction of neighborhood landlords to its events – perhaps 20 or 30 out of 400. This agency hears many reports of neglected and needy tenants and points out that tenants in the private sector have no advocates. The divergence in views revealed by these perceptions compared to the attitudes revealed in the case studies support the need for further studies on this subject.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Although there is an enormous amount of material on seniors and their housing needs, very little of it pertains to seniors in the private rental market. The North American sources we discovered are cited below, organized under seven major headings: affordability and shelter allowances, characteristics of tenants in the private rental market, disabilities and barrier-free design, providing services to enable aging in place, landlord attitudes, and satisfaction with living arrangements.

Following the North American literature review, the situation in Australia and the U.K. is briefly discussed.

Affordability and Shelter Allowances

Golant et al (1990, 4) point out that elderly owners and renters face different affordability pressures. "While the average economic health of the elderly has steadily improved over the last two decades, the distribution has become increasingly skewed, and the proportion of elderly renters experiencing financial stress has grown".

The BC Seniors Advisory Council (1993, 3) suggests that affordability is the major housing concern of seniors, closely associated with seniors' desire to have secure tenancy in the homes they know for as long as they choose. Renters are believed by the Council to be particularly vulnerable, faced with a "chronic problem of excessive rent increases".

Zamprelli (in Gutman and Blackie, 1984, 127) comments that shelter allowances can and should be complementary to public sector supply side strategies, citing the Manitoba experience with shelter allowances. Zamprell's analysis of the Manitoba SAFER program supported other research findings that many seniors with affordability problems would prefer a rent subsidy to enable them to age in place rather than moving to a seniors' project. At the time Zamprelli was writing of course, both shelter allowances and publicly funded seniors' projects were funded much more generously than is the case today.

Characteristics of Aging Tenants in the Private Rental Market

Hickey (CMHC, Moncton Conference Proceedings, 1990, 18) suggests that the frail elderly (defined as those who need help with at least one activity of daily living) living in private (or subsidized) apartments tend to be older, single, and female and to have lower incomes than the frail elderly living in their own homes. Hickey also found that they were more likely to make use of home care services and to live in urban areas. Interestingly, Hickey also found that relative to those living in private homes or in subsidized apartments, those living in private apartments were frailer.

He stressed that for all categories of the frail elderly, it was vital to discover new technologies that would enable them to age in place in an environment that reflects their self-respect, self-esteem and dignity.

Golant et al (1990, 83) describe elderly renters in a similar manner. "Among elderly renters, there tend to be many more who are single, female, and low income. The housing problems of elderly homeowners are mainly related to the cost of upkeep, increasing local taxes, and declining physical ability to maintain a dwelling. For elderly renters, the main problems are rising rents where rent control does not exist, and the declining condition of the units where rent control does exist."

Hulchanski and McDonald (in CAG proceedings, 1995, 84) conclude on the basis of data from the Survey of Aging and Independence that if people 45 years of age or older do not own a home and do not have a relatively well-paying job, the prospects for being well-housed and financially secure in retirement are not encouraging. Data comparisons between owners and renters show that renters live in housing that is incompatible with the needs of seniors.

The Survey itself (Canada, Ministry of National Health and Welfare, 1993, 24) reports that nationally, 22 percent of survey respondents were renters. Provincial ratios vary widely, from 13 percent in Atlantic Canada to 33 percent in Quebec. [13]

The 411 Seniors' Society (1994, ii), an organization operating in downtown Vancouver, deals with a different group of seniors than is described in most other studies. Based on the results of a 1994 survey, the Society finds that males outnumber females three to one and that almost all residents are renters. The survey also found no indication of residents in serious financial crisis. Similar to other demographic studies, the 411 survey indicates that three-quarters of residents live alone.

Disabilities and Barrier-Free Designs

Golant et al (1990, 65) point out the implications of the fact that the incidence of disability increases with age. "With the growing size of the elderly in both the US and Canada, and the fact that an increasing proportion of the elderly will be very old in the coming decades, the links between disability and housing will take on an even greater importance". A disabled elderly population will mean greater financial expenditures and increased case management demands.

CMHC, the Saskatchewan Department of Municipal Government, and the Saskatchewan Home Builders' Association (no date) recommend a great variety of ways to make existing low-rise apartment buildings more suitable for aging tenants. As the authors point out, "Many walk-up apartment buildings were constructed during the 1970's, 1980's, and 1990's that were not required by the Building Code to be barrier-free.

[13] As Chapter One indicates, Census data indicate that 28 percent of Canada's seniors are renters.

As our society grows older, the number of people with some type of mobility, visual, or hearing impairment is increasing rapidly. The supply of suitable accommodation for people with these kinds of impairments is limited and soon will not be able to satisfy the demand.

The Multi-Family Council of the Saskatoon Homebuilders' Association recognized this changing market situation and recommended that a Guide be prepared that would assist building owners and managers make the decisions that would result in portions of buildings or entire buildings becoming barrier-free." The Guide that subsequently was prepared provides advice on a number of modifications to allow aging in place, ranging from mailbox height to elevator installation. An assessment tool that includes budgeting guidelines is also provided.

The 411 Seniors' Society study (1994, ii) reports that among its survey respondents, more than one-fifth had fallen in the preceding 12 months and/or had been hospitalized. Almost 40 percent reported a decline in health, particularly related to arthritis and memory failure/confusion. Partly as a consequence of these physical conditions, wheelchair accessible units and universal designs in housing were valued highly by survey respondents.

Providing Services to Enable Aging in Place

Chappell (CMHC, Halifax Conference Proceedings, 1988, 52) indicates that seniors choosing self-contained apartments that offer only limited internal services are more confident about their future health and abilities than those choosing an option offering more care. According to Chappell, the critical variable enabling seniors to remain in the housing option of their choice is "the provision of a comprehensive range of universal and accessible community and social services".

Chappell (CMHC, Vancouver Conference Proceedings, 1990, 37) describes a program operating in Manitoba (Support Services to Seniors) that helps seniors to live independently in the community. The program can operate quite differently from community to community depending on community needs and on the strength of the volunteer community in each community. In many cases what seems critical to the success of the program is the establishment of a tenant resource coordinator who operates within a seniors housing project as coordinator, facilitator, developer of supports and housing environment, and liaison between the tenant community and the resources. These comments apply to projects in the public sector of course. Chappell reports an interesting finding - in projects where tenant resource coordinators were active, the use of health care services did not increase over a two year period in spite of the fact that tenants' health deteriorated.

Landlord Attitudes

Barker et al (1988, 610) focus on the notion that landlords constitute powerful "gatekeepers" in the community because of their ability to permit or deny access to accommodation to older people. As such, "they are important arbiters of community standards and agents of social control". Barker believes that landlords may manipulate and exploit senior tenants, but may also play a significant role in helping frail elderly tenants remain in the community. Generally, the primary reason for non-acceptance as a tenant or for eviction was mental illness.

Managers in the non-profit sector (nine of the 34 cases in the Barker study were non-profit projects) were found to be better trained and better able to cope with more severely handicapped tenants than were managers in the for-profit sector.

Interestingly, as Barker states, "managers had a clear and remarkably uniform vision of older people as tenants. Elderly tenants come close to the managers' ideal in many respects." They are viewed as being good tenants and also as less troublesome than younger tenants. Specifically, the reasons landlords prefer senior tenants are that they pay the rent on time, they are more co-operative and less demanding than younger tenants, they maintain their units better, and they are quieter. Although the large majority of landlords shared this view, one in five did not, believing that the incidence of dementia and other health problems meant that senior tenants were more troublesome than younger tenants.

Barker finds that it is common for landlords to go out of their way to help elderly tenants age in place. She quotes at length a landlord dealing with an increasingly frail tenant and concludes on the basis of this and her 43 other case study landlords that "This (the substance of the quotation) points up the buffering, social support capacity of the manager with respect to his tenant's frailties; that is, his finding assistive devices, showing concern and compassion, tolerating personal foibles, contacting social service agencies, coping as far as possible with a tenant whose mental status and personal habits are deteriorating. And it demonstrates the potential a manager has for catalyzing residential change; that is, his deciding when the limit has been reached in coping with an ailing tenant, calling in social service agencies to assess or remove a tenant to more suitable premises, perhaps even evicting a troublesome tenant."

Barker constructs a hierarchy of formal responses to describe what the typical landlord does when faced with frail and failing elderly tenants: first, phoning next of kin, friends, social service agencies, or health units; second, the provision of extra, special services such as shopping, or transportation to appointments; and third, the establishment of a regular system for checking on such tenants.

When the situation finally becomes untenable, landlords either persuade elderly tenants (or their families) that they need to move elsewhere, or they are forced to evict. All landlords and managers are uneasy about eviction, but often there is no other alternative.

Satisfaction with Living Arrangements

Doyle (1990, Summary) concludes that problems of isolation encountered by elderly people are most likely to be found among renters. Alleviating this phenomenon can be approached in three main ways: by paying attention to issues of safety and quality maintenance, by management policies that encourage tenant participation, and by various kinds of community development initiatives.

Romank (1991, 38) summarizes the reasons why respondents in her study would favorably consider renting: "Respondents who were interested in this option liked the security and freedom apartment buildings provided, preferred adult only buildings, and felt there were less "hassles" with maintenance and upkeep.

Gutman et al (1987, 45) report on the results of focus groups in which seniors suggest that the most commonly perceived advantage of renting is not having to worry about maintenance, either internal or external. Other perceived advantages were not being "locked in" to a particular dwelling, freedom from security concerns during absences from home, and the ability to do other things with one's money.

The 411 Seniors' Society study concludes that the majority of area residents is not socially isolated. "Rather, they are satisfied with life and involved in at least one activity in the community." They would like better access to services though, such as grocery stores, drugstores, medical services, and transportation.

International Sources

In the UK, the small private rental sector is disproportionately occupied by the old and the very old. However, no public resources at all are directed specifically towards these tenants, although they are eligible for housing benefits (income support) and for disability grants, as are all private renters.[13] Elderly tenants in the social rented sector and elderly homeowners are the focus of some government attention, but not elderly tenants in the private rental sector. Very little research in the UK has been done on elderly renters in the private sector.

We were not able to identify any Australian initiatives focused specifically on elderly renters in the private sector.

[13] Dr, Christine Oldman, Centre for Housing Policy, York University; Anthea Tinker, Institute for Gerontology, King's College, London, Louise Russell, Age Concern England.

Chapter Three: Case Study Analysis

As indicted in Chapter One, landlords were recruited to participate in the case studies on the basis of wording in rental advertisements, or on the basis of the researchers' knowledge of the rental market in each particular city. A copy of the interview guide is included in the Appendix. Interviews were conducted in person on site. The rest of this chapter describes and summarizes the results of the interviews.

Seniors have been defined in this report as those aged 55 and over. Although the incidence of renting is lower among those aged 55-64, as Table 1.2 on page 2 illustrates, it increases with age. The incidence of disability also increases with age, as discussed later in this chapter. [14] It is important to bear these facts in mind while reading the case study analysis. Most of the 55 year olds now living completely independently in the case study buildings are going to be 85 year olds living in the same buildings, but probably facing more barriers to independent living.

1. Location

Eleven of the case study buildings were in the Greater Vancouver area, six in Winnipeg, and eight in Victoria.

Table 3.1 – Location of Case Study Buildings

City	Number of Case Studies	Average Proportion of Tenants Over 55
Vancouver	11	57.7
Victoria	8	71.3
Winnipeg	6	66.7
Total	25	61.9

2. Ownership

By definition, all the buildings are owned and operated by private, for-profit entities. Tenants in 15 of the 19 BC case study buildings and in two of the six Manitoba case study buildings were receiving rent supplement assistance from either the BC or Manitoba governments,[15] but that was the extent of public funding in all the case study buildings.

[14] See page 16.

[15] Landlords could not provide precise estimates of the number of tenants receiving rent supplement assistance because they do not necessarily know if tenants are receiving benefits.

3. Structure Type

As Table 3.2 illustrates, slightly more than half the case study buildings were high rise structures, defined generally as buildings over 3 storeys, or 4 storeys in BC. Sometimes the distinction between high rise and low rise buildings is the requirement for an elevator, and sometimes it is the type of construction (concrete versus wood frame). In this study, the type of construction was the basis for making a distinction between high rise and low rise buildings. All the case study buildings have elevators.

Table 3. 2 - Buildings by Structure Type

City	Number of High Rise Buildings	Number of Low Rise Buildings
Vancouver	4	6
Victoria	3	5
Winnipeg	6	0
Total	13	11

(Note that two of the Vancouver case studies were a composite of buildings. In one case all the component buildings were high rises and in the other they were a mixture of high rise and low rise. The mixed case has not been included in Table 3.2, which is why the total adds up to 24 buildings, not 25.)

4. Age of Building

Not surprisingly, given the average age of most of Canada's private rental stock, most of the case study buildings were far from new. The only new building in Vancouver was originally built for the condo market and converted to rental when the units could not be sold. The only case study building in Winnipeg less than 10 years old is a 9 year old structure gradually being converted to condominiums. One of the other, newer structures in Winnipeg was built in the late 1980's under the aegis of government programs designed to stimulate downtown Winnipeg.

The average age of the Vancouver case study buildings is 25.3 years, slightly newer than the 25.9 year average of the Victoria case study buildings. The Winnipeg buildings were the newest, with an average age of just under 20 years.

There is no real relationship between age of building and number of units, although as Table 3.4 on page 13 indicates, most of the very large buildings are in Winnipeg, where the average age of the stock is the lowest of the three cities.

Note that neither of the Vancouver composite cases has been included in Table 3.3, resulting in a total of 23 observations.

Table 3.3 – Case Study Buildings by Age					
City	Less than 10 Years	10-14 Years	15-19 Years	20 Years+	Average Age
Vancouver	1	0	0	8	25.3
Victoria	0	1	0	7	25.9
Winnipeg	1	2	0	3	19.8

5. Number of Units

Perhaps somewhat counter-intuitively, the largest buildings were located in Winnipeg while the smallest were located in Vancouver.

Table 3.4 – Case Study Buildings by Number of Units					
City	Less than 50	50-100	101-199	200+	Average Size
Vancouver	4	2	1	2	97
Victoria	2	1	4	1	113
Winnipeg	0	1	1	4	212
Total	6	4	6	7	132

Note that again, neither of the Vancouver composite cases has been included in Table 3.4, resulting in a total of 23 observations.

6. Proportion of Seniors

As Table 3.5 on page 14 indicates, the largest concentrations of seniors were found in the Victoria case study buildings, which is probably a function of the relative numerical significance of seniors in the City's population.

Table 3.5 – Case Study Buildings by Proportion of Seniors					
City	Less than 25%	25-50%	51-74%	75%+	Average Proportion of Seniors
Vancouver	1	3	4	2	57.7
Victoria	0	3	0	5	71.3
Winnipeg	0	2	2	2	66.7
Total	1	8	6	9	61.9

(Note that one of the Vancouver composite cases has been included in Table 3.5, resulting in a total of 24 buildings rather than 25.)

7. Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

In most cases, features of case buildings that were appropriate for aging tenants were appropriate only inadvertently – they were not deliberately introduced or planned for, although of course that makes no difference to the suitability of the accommodation. Examples of such features were suite doors that were wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs, low pile (or no) carpets, bathrooms large enough to accommodate wheelchairs, and so on.

Table 3.6 on page 15 summarizes the existence of the physical features present (or absent) in the case study buildings.

The most common examples of retrofitting for aging tenants were the installation of grab bars in the bathrooms. In addition, every building had ramps at the entrances, but it was not clear to what extent these were built in response to the needs of aging tenants, or to the needs of disabled tenants of any age. In only 13 cases, representing eight separate buildings, were physical modifications made in addition to the installation of grab bars. These modifications are listed below:

- Renovation of area adjacent to swimming pool to provide activity room for senior tenants (Vancouver);
- Remodelling of some units to accommodate wheelchair-bound tenants, installation of brighter lights (Victoria);
- Installation of automatic doors at entry (1 Vancouver, 3 Victoria, 3 Winnipeg);
- Installation of carpet more suitable for wheelchairs (1 Vancouver, 1 Victoria);
- Installation of handrails in bathtub, replacement of conventional handles with levers (1 Vancouver, 1 Victoria).

In all these cases, building modifications were made either to make life easier for current tenants, or to make the buildings more attractive to senior tenants. However, most senior tenants did not experience significant problems living in the case study buildings, although some did.

Table 3.6 – Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants, % of Buildings where feature present

	Item	Vancouver	Victoria	Winnipeg
Units	* are the doorways wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair/scooter?	100	100	100
	* bathroom: can a person in a wheelchair use the bathroom?	64	50	83
	* walk-in shower			
	* grab bars in bath	82	63	67
	* knee space under sinks (specify in bathroom or kitchen)	0	0	0
	* emergency call system	27	13	0
	* low light switches (33-42 in.) and raised outlets (16-21 in.)			
	* hard fibre carpet and/or no carpet	55	63	50
	* barrier-free access to balcony or patio (no threshold)	36	25	0
	* lever handles on doors and sinks	36	9	0
	* low top cabinets (at least one shelf no higher than 4 ft)	0	0	0
	* roll-out cabinet shelves	0	0	0
Building entrance	* barrier free entrance (no stairs or ramp)	100	100	100
	* door wide enough to accommodate wheelchair/scooter	100	100	100
	* secure entry (intercom system)	100	100	100
Common Areas				
	* doors wide enough to accommodate wheelchair	100	100	100
	* hand rails	9	13	0
	* automated doors	9	38	50
	* elevator large enough for stretcher	100	100	100
	* stairwells allow easy stretcher access	27	38	66
	* brightly lit hallways	100	100	100

It is interesting in the context of a discussion about the physical features of buildings to note that the 1997 Statistics Canada report entitled A Portrait of Seniors in Canada includes data from the 1991 Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS) indicating that 46 percent of all people over the age of 65 had disabilities. For people over the age of 85, that proportion rises to 84 percent. [16] Slightly more than 85 percent of disabled persons over the age of 65 lived in private households, compared to 92 percent of non-disabled persons over the age of 65.

It is important to note in this context that "disability" is defined as an inability to carry out one or more activities of daily living without assistance. It is also important to note that of all people over the age of 65 with disabilities, only 32% have severe disabilities. [17]

Data from the HALS report show that the biggest problem by far faced by disabled people over the age of 65 was using the bathtub or shower. Almost 17 percent reported such difficulty, compared to the next biggest problems (using the washer and dryer and using the toilet facilities), which were reported by just over 5.0 percent of disabled persons over 65.[18] The table below, which is based on data from HALS, shows that the incidence of problems is actually quite low, although it certainly exceeds the incidence of ameliorative action. The data apply to both owners and renters.

Table 3.7 – Difficulty with Certain Household Features Experienced by Seniors with Disabilities

Feature	% Experiencing Difficulty	% with Modified Facilities
Bathtub/shower	16.8	9.9 [19]
Toilet Facilities	5.1	3.9
Washer/Dryer	5.6	0.3
Kitchen Stove	5.2	0.5
Bathroom Sink	4.0	0.9
Kitchen Cabinets	5.4	0.6
Electronic Equipment	3.1	0.3
Kitchen sink/counters	3.4	0.7
Refrigerator	2.2	na

Had Table 3.7 been produced on the basis of the over-65 population as a whole, rather than on the basis of the disabled population over the age of 65, the ratios in the table would have been substantially reduced.

[16] Statistics Canada, A Portrait of Seniors in Canada, Catalogue No. 89-519 XPE, 1997, page16.
[17] Ibid, page 26.
[18] Ibid, page 49.
[19] Although the incidence of modification to bathtubs/showers in the case study buildings appears much higher than the HALS data suggest, it needs to be remembered that a case study building was included in this category if only one unit had had grab bars installed.

This may imply that owners and landlords of buildings housing a significant number of aging tenants do not need to be overly concerned about the potential demand for physical modifications. Wheelchair accessibility for example is a need that few people ever experience.

There are two other HALS ratios quoted in the seniors' study that are interesting in the context of this discussion. One is the percentage of disabled seniors using specialized features to enter/leave their residence (7.4 percent), and the other is the percentage of disabled seniors needing such a feature but not having it (3.4 percent).[20] As noted above, seven of the case study buildings had installed automatic entrance doors, or almost 30%. The much higher incidence of automatic doors in this study than in the HALS data is probably almost entirely due to structural differences (i.e., the case study buildings were all low rise or high rise apartment buildings, whereas most seniors live in single family dwellings and the HALS data would reflect this).

Some managers of the case study buildings expressed concerns about liability issues associated with physical features of their buildings, including modifications made to assist their aging tenants. This was often the case with the installation of grab bars. Owners or managers would allow the installation of grab bars, but would insist that tenants install them themselves, to avoid any liability issues associated with faulty installation. In some cases, the structure of the building itself was such that truly secure installations could not be accomplished without extensive retrofitting of bathroom walls. Owners were generally unwilling to contemplate retrofitting on such a scale.

Other concerns included uneven floors (in old buildings) and unreliable elevators. Both these concerns were suggested by the manager of several older buildings in an affluent area of Vancouver. Although nothing could be done about the nature of the floors in some of the older buildings, the manager was nonetheless concerned about the possibility of lawsuits in the event of falls. Similarly, although the elevators in the older buildings were properly maintained, they were somewhat unreliable because of their age. Often their repair would require several hours, causing great concern that during one of these periods an elderly tenants would experience a medical emergency and be unable to get out of the building since the stairways could not accommodate a stretcher.

As Table 3.6 indicates, in a majority of cases in all three cities access to apartment balconies was not possible in a wheelchair. Although this lack of access is a serious problem for people in wheelchairs, it is not an issue that affects most tenants.

Finally, the issue of fire safety was not included in the interview guide. Information from other sources indicates that many landlords with aging tenants have made provision for their special needs in their fire safety plans. [21] For example, a list of frail tenants may be given to the Fire Department, or fire wardens may be appointed on each floor, or the property manager and staff may have established plans to evacuate frail tenants.

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[20] Statistics Canada, op.cit, page 50.

[21] Wallace, Jennifer, Fire Safety Study, Gerontology Research Centre, Simon Fraser University, 1998.

8. Other Services and Features that Help Aging Tenants

This was something of a "grab bag" category. For example, this section in one of the Vancouver case studies tells the story of an elderly tenant who visited the manager twice a day to get her eye drops administered.

In other cases, this section of the Interview Guide focused on descriptions of social activities organized for the tenants, or of efforts made by managers to ensure that their tenants were aware of the availability of rent supplement benefits. Some of the findings are listed briefly below:

- Required damage deposit of $100 for seniors rather than standard half month's rent (Vancouver)
- Organized activities for senior tenants to "get them out of their rooms" (Vancouver)
- Extra effort (landscaping was extremely attractive) put into flower gardens for benefit of senior tenants particularly (Vancouver)
- Seniors who have been tenants for more than 10 years have their rents frozen (Vancouver)
- Managers drive tenants to doctor's appointments (Vancouver)
- Building offers numerous activities for tenants, including organized card games and pool tournaments, barbecues, birthday parties (Victoria)
- Building contains a laundry room cum family room (books, ironing board, hairdryer, as well as laundry equipment) that is open 24 hours to encourage socializing by tenants at any time of the day or night (Victoria, exclusively seniors' building)
- Some units have locks on both sides of their doors so tenants with dementia can continue to live in the building (Victoria)
- Old-fashioned carpet in hallways is retained and maintained by Manager because the tenants like it (Victoria)
- BBQ's and other social events on the roof garden are organized by the Manager for his senior tenants (Victoria)
- Manager checks daily on a number of tenants who are waiting for placement into a multi-level care facility (Winnipeg)
- Manager organizes games and dinners in the building's recreation room (Winnipeg)

It is true of course that not all the case study buildings organized special activities for tenants and not all managers were actively involved in caring for their tenants. But in most cases, especially in the Victoria case study buildings, at least one service or feature was provided that went beyond what might be considered normal landlord-tenant relationships. Table 3.8 on page 19 illustrates this point. An "x" appears in Table 3.8 where these services are provided

Table 3.8 – Other Services and Features to assist Aging Tenants							
Case Study Building	Organized Activities	Drive to shopping, appoint-ments	Reduced Deposits Rent Reduction	Change Light-Bulbs, Etc	Buddy System	Provide Chairs, Books in Laundry	Gifts at Christ-mas
1	X	X			X		
2							
3			X		X		
4							
5			X				
6							X
7							
8		X			X		
9			X	X			
10							
11							
12	X	X				X	
13					X		
14	X	X		X		X	
15	X					X	
16				X	X		
17	X			X	X	X	
18							
19	X			X	X		
20							
21							
22					X		
23	X						
24				X			
25							

9. Characteristics of Senior Tenants

As indicted in Table 3.9 on page 20, case study buildings were largely tenanted by lone, elderly women, especially in Vancouver and Victoria.

Table 3.9 – Characteristics of Senior Tenants					
City	% Seniors in Case Study Buildings	% Female (of senior tenants)	% Lone (of senior tenants)	Average Age (of senior tenants)	Income of senior tenants
Vancouver	57.7	83	85	75+	Low-middle
Victoria	71.3	72	81	70+	Low-middle
Winnipeg	66.7	68	71	65+	Low-middle

Most building managers reported having extremely old tenants in their buildings – in one case, a 100 year old. Tenants between 85 and 95 were very common. In view of sex related differences in life expectancy, female tenants comprised the majority in every case, often overwhelmingly.

In many of the case study buildings, tenants were in receipt of rent supplement benefits, although as mentioned earlier in this report, it is not possible to know precisely how many. In BC for examples, applicants for SAFER (Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters) benefits may provide a copy of their most recent lease in support of their application, with the result that the landlord will not know that SAFER has been applied for, or approved.

In most cases the income profile of the tenants matched the rent profile of the building (relatively low rents, relatively low income tenants or the reverse), but there was one exception. The manager of several rental buildings in an affluent area of Vancouver reported that he had several cases of tenants spending a disproportionate amount of their income on rent in order to be able to stay in the neighborhood they had lived in for years. That is, the manager believed that these tenants could not really afford to live in his buildings and were sacrificing other needs in order to pay the rent.

10. Management Profile

As partially revealed by Table 3.10 on page 21, the average income earned by the managers of the case study buildings was typically quite low, especially in view of the long hours most managers are expected to work. Very few of them get two days off a week. Many managers earned between $30,000 and $40,000, an amount which does not generally assume free rent as part of the equation. Since free rent is deemed a taxable benefit, few building owners provide a rent-free apartment for their managers.

Table 3.10 – Management Profile			
City	Percent Earning Less than $30,000 pa	Percent with Formal Qualifications*	Average Years Of Experience
Vancouver	18	36	11
Victoria	38	38	8
Winnipeg	na	17	6

* "Formal qualifications means formal property management qualifications. Only one manager had received special training in aging issues, other than on the job training.

Data from the 1996 Census indicate that property managers as a group earn below average salaries. The average income earned by female property managers who worked full-time full-year in 1995, the reference year for income information collected by the 1996 Census, was $29,424, compared to an average income of $31,466 earned by all women who worked full-time full-year.

Male property managers working full-time full-year earned considerably more than females ($39,956), but still well below the average for all males ($44,784). In many cases, property management duties (and annual incomes) were shared by a husband and wife team who were either retired or semi-retired. This is quite typical of property managers, who tend to be significantly older than workers in other occupations. [22]

Most of the training managers received was on the job, although several had obtained formal property management credentials. Perhaps as a result of the fact that many property managers were older and retired or semi-retired, they were generally extremely accommodating vis-à-vis the needs of their aging tenants. However, several expressed concern about the changing nature of their role and emphasized that they were property managers, not social workers.

11. Dealing with Loss of Independence

Almost all managers had dealt with tenants who became too frail to continue living in their buildings. Table 3.11 on page 22 summarizes their experience.

[22] See for example, Property Administrators in BC Workfutures, An Occupational Outlook.

Barker goes on to discuss the potential a manager has for catalyzing change – for deciding when the limit has been reached in terms of a tenant's ability to live independently.

Almost all the case study managers had dealt with this issue, and several indicated that they were concerned about the increasing demands on their time resulting from aging and increasingly frail tenants. As one manager put it: "We are property managers, we are not social workers."

Notwithstanding this comment, it appears quite evident that aging tenants in the private rental market are, generally speaking, well served by the managers of the buildings they live in. A comparison between aging tenants living in condominiums or single family homes on the one hand, and those living in private rental buildings on the other, might very well conclude that from the perspective of living in a supportive environment, renters are better off than owners.

Chapter Four: Public and Private Programs to Help Aging Tenants and their Managers

With one exception, the programs described in this chapter are either government programs that can help tenants age in place in the private rental market, or they are government programs that can help tenants age in place in the public rental market, the latter included for comparative purposes.

The one exception is in Saskatchewan, where private landlords have instituted a more systematic approach to enable aging in place than have landlords anywhere else in Canada. More details on the Saskatchewan approach are included later in this chapter.

In general, provincial governments in Canada deal with aging tenants living in the private rental market in two ways – they may provide shelter allowances, which some provinces do, and/or they may provide continuing care type support services. All provinces provide this sort of care. In the public rental sector, most provinces have introduced a variety of special initiatives to assist aging tenants in publicly funded housing projects. These initiatives range from the installation of elevators in buildings without them to the provision of meal services. It should be noted in this context that government programs and policies are evolving rapidly and some of the approaches described in this chapter will certainly be modified as more is learned about what works best.

Before provincial and municipal programs are briefly reviewed, CMHC's HASI (Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence) program is described.

Impact of the HASI Program on Tenants in the Private Rental Market

HASI was initiated in 1991 in support of the National Strategy for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities. The intent of HASI is to assist seniors with diminishing abilities to continue living independently in their homes. A recent evaluation of HASI found that 32% of HASI clients were able to remain in their home a year or longer than they otherwise would have in the absence of HASI benefits.[23]

Data from the Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS), referred to earlier in this report, indicate that 35% of disabled seniors rent and 57% own (the remainder is classified "other"). In spite of this distribution, almost all HASI clients (91.3%) were homeowners, at least on a national basis. Provincially, the percentage ranged from zero in Newfoundland to 24% in Quebec and 20% in BC.

[23] CMHC, Evaluation of Housing Initiatives Under the National Strategy for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities, 1998.

Although the HASI program was successful in attaining its objectives, presumably for renters as well as for owners, there is no further information in the evaluation report about tenants other than how many of them received benefits (365). [24] It may be worthwhile for CMHC to consider an analysis of the evaluation results as they pertain to renters only, notwithstanding the small size of the universe.

British Columbia

In both Vancouver and Victoria there are organizations aimed at bringing private landlords and managers together in an attempt to help them deal with issues that arise as a result of aging tenants. The assistance provided is focused on advice and networking opportunities.

Some health regions in the province are moving to a regional multi-disciplinary integrated service delivery model, meaning that service providers of all types will be concentrated geographically. Each client, including tenants in private rental buildings, will need to be assessed for support services only once, instead of several times if several different support services are required.

BC provides shelter allowances to tenants in the private rental market under the SAFER program.

In the public sector, BC Housing, the provincial housing agency, has been quite aggressive in terms of implementing measures that will help tenants in social housing projects age in place. A program focused on physical modifications involves everything from installing brighter lights in corridors to installing elevators (where absolutely necessary). Agencies delivering care services of various types to social housing projects are co-ordinated.

BC Housing has recently launched an innovative program in an especially troubled seniors' project in the West End of Vancouver. The program involves everything from major physical renovations to the provision of social services. The objective of the program is to improve the quality of life of the tenants and to reduce the administrative burden created by high need tenants.

Alberta

The Aids to Daily Living Program in Alberta provides technical aids such as grab bars, wheelchair ramps, tub supports, and hand rails to assist persons to age in place in both public and private buildings. The Alberta Health Department visits applicants and assesses them to determine their needs.

[24] In total, 4,196 HASI grants were approved between 1992 and 1994, the period reviewed in the evaluation. 8.7% were renters.

A program operating under Home Care provides block funding to operators of seniors' housing that want to provide services to their residents in a co-ordinated fashion, instead of having an assortment of service providers visit each building. Manitoba has a similar program, described later in this chapter.

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan appears to be the only province in Canada where private landlords have taken major steps to make their buildings more suitable for aging tenants. As a result of this desire, which arose in response to a serious vacancy situation, the Saskatchewan Home Builders' Association in association with the Saskatchewan government and CMHC produced a document entitled Adapting Low Rise Residential Buildings: Barrier Free Design Guide. As described in Chapter Two of this report, the objective of this document is to assist building owners and managers make the decisions that will result in all or portions of their buildings becoming barrier-free.

In the public sector, Saskatchewan Assisted Living Services (SALS) provides a community-based service option for low income tenants in seniors' social housing who require a combination of shelter and support services to maintain their independence and to remain living in their homes. The services are provided on a fee for service basis, but are quite affordable because of the community-based delivery approach.

As the program description points out, SALS is most easily introduced in social housing projects that have existing lounges and other common areas that can facilitate the delivery of services.

Saskatchewan also offers an Enriched Housing Program, which is a combination of physical features in public housing projects (common areas for example) and service co-ordination. Since the introduction of the program, the length of stay of tenants has increased by 45 percent, thus reducing pressure on the province's care facilities.

Manitoba

All of the programming available to residents of Manitoba is provided through Home Care or through Support Services for Seniors.

Home Care will provide block home care to complexes with concentrations of seniors. This means that 3-4 staff may provide all necessary services to tenants in a building, replacing a system where 10-12 service providers from a myriad of different agencies and home care services may have been visiting the building.

Support Services for Seniors provides funding on a non-profit basis for salaries to co-ordinate the provision of meal programs and other support services. The program is designed to assist communities in the development of services that will support seniors in maintaining their independence in the community.

The provincial government grant ensures continuity and consistency of services by providing the salary and benefits portion of the project's budget. The community is responsible for all capital and operating expenses, although these are often covered off by fund-raising activities, donations in kind, grants from municipalities, and grants from other funding sources.

A wide variety of services are contemplated by the program, including transportation, heavy cleaning, grocery shopping, yard work, friendly visiting, congregate meals, and electronic surveillance. Any community is eligible for funding. An evaluation of the program undertaken by the Centre on Aging at the University of Manitoba found that the program was extremely cost-effective.

In the public sector in Manitoba, Manitoba Housing is running 10 meal programs in 11 seniors' buildings and also bringing in additional support services through the Manitoba Health Support Services program. The funding is used to pay Manitoba Housing staff co-ordinators referred to as the "Tenant Resource Program". The staff keep track of tenant needs and bring in public or private agencies as required to meet tenant needs. Manitoba Housing is attempting to turn over the meal preparation service to community charitable agencies, partly as a way of reducing heavy staffing costs.

Ontario

There is much concern about the state of the rental stock in Ontario, which consists of approximately 1.3 million rental units, most of them in metropolitan areas. Interestingly, only 23 percent of rental units are found in large, high rise buildings of 100 or more units. Over 60 percent of the stock is 25 years old or older, and this proportion is expected to grow as there have been fewer additions to the rental stock since the 1970's. In the last few years, private rental starts have been fewer than 2,000 annually. In fact, only 20 private sector rental units were built in Toronto last year.

To help seniors remain in their own homes the Ontario government operates a home health care service referred to as In-Home Care and Community Support Services.

To access these services, seniors contact Community Care Access Centres (CCAC's), which undertake to assess needs and recommend the most appropriate care. Depending upon care needs, some of the services may fall under Ministry of Health funding. Many different programs and services are available which are provided by government agencies, municipalities, homes for the aged, charitable not-for-profit groups and for-profit private organizations. Services include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, day programs, visiting, transportation and homemaking.

The extent to which these services are used by renters as opposed to owners and the impact they make on the ability of senior renters to remain in their customary accommodation is unknown.

The Ontario government has not taken a detailed look at these issues for over a decade, since Patterns of Support was published.[25] That report, which was confined to frail senior tenants in public housing projects, was intended to identify the kinds of support senior citizen public housing tenants use. The impetus for the study was, as the report puts it: "Concern is expressed that today's public housing, which was built for self-reliant senior citizens, will become tomorrow's residence for the frail." One of the interesting findings from this survey was that about two-thirds of all assistance received by tenants was provided by informal sources of support such as family and friends, while 20 percent was provided by formal sources of support such as visiting nurses, homemakers, and meal services. The study provided a comparative analysis of seniors surveyed in an earlier study undertaken by the United Senior Citizens of Ontario (USCO) and found that seniors in the community at large received only 3 percent of support services from formal sources. Reasons for this disparity no doubt include the fact that the public housing tenants were older, poorer, more isolated, and more likely to live alone.

Quebec

In the private sector in Québec, the association of private landlords (CORPIQ) recommends that its members, as a good business practice, ensure that their buildings are adapted to the needs of aging tenants by which they mean installing ramps at entrances and making other small adaptations. The CORPIQ reports that to its knowledge, no landlord has taken any extraordinary steps to accommodate the needs of aging tenants.

In the public sector on the other hand, a great deal of activity has occurred. The Québec Housing Corporation is very concerned about the fact that its public housing tenants are aging and are already in need of special services. They are also aware that they cannot evict tenants by reason of their age, nor can they systematically transfer them to publicly funded senior citizen homes, as the available space within that network simply does not exist, and public funding for new units has been scarce for several years. [26]

The QHC encourages local Municipal Housing Authorities to enter into agreements with local social service providers in order that social services be provided to aging tenants. However, in view of the high (and increasing) average age of senior citizens living as tenants in Public Housing projects, the policies and the measures being implemented at the local level will not be sufficient to solve the problem.

[25] Social Data Research Limited, Patterns of Support: The Use of Support Services Among Senior Citizen Public Housing Tenants in Ontario, Ministry of Housing, 1986.
[26] Quebec information supplied by Roger Langlais.

If solutions and measures are not found within five years, the problem will have a marked impact on long term care institutions and hospitals. Between 50,000 and 60 000 seniors will probably not be able to continue living in their Public Housing units and will have to be taken care of somehow. Hospitals are being closed and converted into long-term care facilities. But in view of the shortage of public funding, more and more reliance will be put on the private sector to offer the services currently being provided by the public sector.

Many other initiatives have also been undertaken, described briefly below:

- **Changing the design of future projects**: The first step taken has been in the design of the future public housing projects, to make sure they will conform to the new (1995) National Building Code; this means for example that lifts and elevators are planned for buildings above two stories. Under the previous code, elevators were only required above three floors. In addition new projects will be designed to ensure universal accessibility. The QHC estimates that it would cost between $70 million and $80 million to install elevators in its projects that do not meet the new building code

- **Aging Seniors in Public Housing**: retrofitting or adapting units to the needs of aging seniors is the last resort in the public sector because of the costs involved. The preferred approach is a policy of co-operation with the Ministry of Health and Social Services through their local departments of Health and Social services. At the local level, these are represented by CLSC (Centre local de services communautaires) which are well distributed across the Province and offer several health services to the community, including help in cleaning, personal care, shopping, company, delivered meals, surveillance, alarm systems, 24 hour presence on the premises and daily visits to make sure the person is well and their needs are taken care of.

New Brunswick

In the private rental sector, limited rent supplement assistance is available for renters. In the public sector, a seniors' housing initiative called Independent Living: Aging-in-Place provides assistance for aging tenants. For example, special elevators, grab bars, improved lighting, wheelchair ramps, and handrails may be provided to meet the needs of aging tenants. The initiative also encourages partnerships among government departments and private agencies to provide support services and information to senior tenants living in public housing.

The funding of the first component of the program is somewhat limited – about $1 million has been spent since the inception of the program in 1994. Almost 80 percent of the budget has been allocated for the provision of elevators and lifts. The second component of the program is directed towards services such as the Victorian Order of Nurses and Meals on Wheels.

Prince Edward Island

Currently, the PEI Department of Health and Social Services is allowing families to rent accommodation in formerly exclusively seniors' buildings because of vacancies.

An interesting initiative in PEI involves the rental of motel units in the off-season by seniors who find their own homes too isolated in the winter months. Approximately 80 seniors rent motel rooms in the Charlottetown/Summerside areas at a time when the motels would normally experience very high vacancy rates.

Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia is the only province, to our knowledge, to have produced a fairly recent report on aging in place issues, although they apply only to the public sector. The report, entitled Aging in Place: Strategies to Meet the Needs of Senior Tenants in Non-Profit Housing was published in 1996.

Nova Scotia also provides a number of programs to enable seniors to age in place in social housing including:

- Elevator Retrofit Program
- Enriched Rent-to-Income Housing – provides certain services on a fee basis. Support services include meals, housekeeping, laundry, personal care, and medication. Services are available only in public housing projects that have been built adjacent to nursing homes.
- Congregate Housing – support services such as meals are provided by a resident Certified Nursing Assistant.

The only program available to private sector landlords in Nova Scotia is a rent supplement program.

Newfoundland

It is uncommon in Newfoundland to find large concentrations of seniors living in private rental accommodation. They are more typically scattered throughout the community. Where there are several seniors living in the same private rental building, one home support worker would visit the tenants on the same day, but otherwise there are no particular services for aging tenants in the private rental sector.

Guide/Directory

At the inception of this study, one of the hypotheses was that a guide to managing seniors' housing projects and/or a directory of resources of some type would be useful for managers. However, in the course of undertaking this study, it became apparent that the development and distribution of such a guide would be unnecessary and impractical for a number of reasons:

- Most managers do not want one, for a variety of reasons. Managers tend to be practical types, more likely to pick up the phone and ask for help than to consult a document of some sort. Many are very familiar with local resources and rely on them for assistance when dealing with an unfamiliar or intractable problem. Indeed, during the course of the case study interviews in British Columbia, only one manager mentioned that he had a copy of the Provincial government's directory of services for seniors. None of the case study managers had a copy of local directories available in their cities.

  The Seniors West End Link project (SWEL) in Vancouver is one of the very few agencies identified during the preparation of this study that has as its objective the networking and education of neighborhood landlords. SWEL produced a Resource Guide, produced in a loose-leaf format to facilitate easy upgrading. The SWEL guide lists 14 topics in its index, including handyman services, housing, meal programs, legal/financial, seniors' centres, shopping, and transportation. However, the SWEL project has never had sufficient funds to either update the guide or keep track of the managers who have one. Managers may be very transient and often the guide disappears when managers change locations. Of 550 individual resident property managers in the area, only 100 have ever obtained a copy of the SWEL Handbook in spite of heavy promotion.

- In most communities, guides or directories already exist. In Victoria for example, there are at least three directories for seniors – the Community Resources Handbook for Capital Region Seniors, which is produced by a consortia of agencies; a Directory of Services published by the Capital Region District and the Capital Health Region; and Information for Seniors, which is published by the Provincial government's Office for Seniors.

In the Greater Vancouver area there is no single source of information about existing seniors' directories, but there are probably at least 10. In Winnipeg, the Seniors' Today newspaper publishes an annual directory of seniors' services.

- Many community agencies that have developed and distributed guides have found their production, and more important, their updating, to be very expensive. For example, the Rotary Club in partnership with the West End Seniors' Network in Vancouver produced a Seniors' Resource Guide in 1996. It contains information of interest to all community residents, not just landlords and tenants. In spite of the fact that advertising was sold to community merchants in an effort to recoup costs, the organizations lost a substantial amount of money producing the guide and have no plans to repeat the exercise.

  The Information for Seniors guide published by the Province of British Columbia is published every two or three years and costs approximately $100,000 per edition.

- Resource guides are very local, reflecting local needs, local interests, local services, local volunteer capacity and other local resources. In PEI for example, there is no resource directory as such for either landlords or their tenants. However, there are a variety of other sources of information including a very comprehensive web site maintained by the provincial government, a Senior Citizens Service Information page in local phone books, a toll free government run information line, a Health Information Resource Centre and a Seniors' Info Line, which is a privately (church) run information line that will provide phone numbers and information about seniors programs to callers.

  In Manitoba, one of the major programs that assists seniors to remain in their own homes, the Support for Services program, is entirely local – the services provided in one community may be completely different from the services provided in another community only 25 miles away.

- For services that are available province-wide, many provinces produce directories of their own. In BC, the guide is called "Information for Seniors: Your Guide to Programs and Benefits in British Columbia". It contains sections on Finances (OAS, GIS, etc), Health Services, Housing, Recreation, Transportation, and Personal Security (Legal Aid, Consumer Protection).

The question as to whether a **guide** to managing seniors' housing projects would be better received and more useful than a resource directory is an interesting one. Some of the case study managers thought that it would be helpful to be able to refer to a document that could give them some assistance in terms of issues such as recognizing and dealing with dementia and substance abuse.

One of the individuals who worked on the establishment of SWEL also worked on the development of a guide for managers of rental housing in the West End. The guide was produced several years ago and contained information on physical issues (how to make buildings more suitable for aging tenants); health issues (how to recognize dementia, alcohol abuse, other conditions); service and resource availability; and other such items. Essentially, the guide was intended to make life easier for property managers whose tenants were aging. Although the guide was developed and produced, it was never distributed for various administrative and procedural reasons. The driving force behind the guide says now that she would never do such a thing again because she believes that personal contact is a far better way to engage and assist managers than is the development and distribution of a guide or directory. For example, the operation a program such as SWEL is probably a better way to use limited resources than the development and distribution of a guide.[27]

Other Tools

- In some areas, managers' associations exist and are considered to be helpful by the managers who belong to them.
- All managers stressed the importance of keeping on file the names of family members who can be called upon if necessary.
- Most managers are very familiar with the local health unit and consider it to be the source of much useful assistance.
- In some cases, managers have organized buddy systems within their buildings and find them helpful.
- Similarly, some managers have taken special steps to provide a central location for socializing in their buildings, often the laundry room. Easy chairs, ironing boards, books, tables, and even hair dryers may be installed in laundry rooms to encourage tenants to avoid isolation. A seniors' housing activist in Victoria commented that she could instantly gauge the suitability of a rental building merely by glancing at the laundry room.

[27] Ann Klockenberg, City of Vancouver Social Planning Department

- Owners and/or landlords who are actively considering retrofitting their buildings to make them more appealing for seniors may be interested in obtaining a copy of the Saskatchewan report discussed in this study and referenced in the bibliography.

- It is even possible that some owners and managers may be interested in reading a copy of this report.

Chapter Six: Concluding Chapter

There are now 1 million renter households with a head aged 55 and over. In 2006, only seven years from now, there will be another 345,000 similar households. Little is known about these households, nor about their accommodation, beyond the fact that the housing stock is aging as rapidly as its inhabitants.

A detailed analysis of data from the 1991 and 1996 Censuses would be very useful to shed some light on this largely unexplored area. Individual attributes such as gender, age group, income, household type, and household size should be scrutinized, along with dwelling unit attributes such as age, type, condition, and rent levels.

More research studies such as this one would also be helpful. Although the Census based analysis described in the preceding paragraph would be extremely useful, it would capture only one component of the overall picture. To our knowledge, no study involving interviews of individual senior renters has ever been done in Canada. This is partly due to the fact that individual senior renters are a more difficult group to survey than similar groups in social housing projects. [28] Landlords and managers, while easier to identify and interview than individual renters, still necessitate a fairly onerous process of identification, contact, soliciting co-operation, and finally, interviewing.

The case studies that were undertaken as part of this study revealed that almost without exception, managers of projects that are occupied by large numbers of senior tenants are caring and committed individuals, quite willing to perform services that go beyond those required in their employment contract. This willingness is partly due to concern about and affection for their tenants, and partly due to an almost unanimously shared belief that senior tenants are much less trouble and much more reliable than younger tenants. It was also common in the case study buildings to find examples of physical modifications that had been made to facilitate aging in place, although most of these examples involved fairly minor modifications such as the installation of grab bars in bathrooms.

All of the case study managers had dealt with tenants who had become unable to continue living independently and it is a statistical certainty that this phenomenon is going to increase. How private sector managers and owners are going to deal with ever-increasing numbers of frail tenants is a major unknown.

[28] When asked whether a current study of isolated seniors includes renters in the private sector, Dr. Sandra Cusack, Guttman-Gee Research Fellow in Educational Gerontology at Simon Fraser University responded thusly: "No. For reasons of safety and security, it is extremely difficult to get access to isolated seniors in the private market. "

The case study managers, although sometimes concerned about the need to function more as social workers than property managers, are by and large coping with the demands of their aging tenants. Whether they can continue to cope with larger numbers and older tenants is an unanswerable question. It seems inevitable that increasing resources of various types – medical care, housekeeping assistance, meal preparation, emergency response systems – are going to be required by tenants in the private rental sector if institutionalization is to be avoided.

Many provincial and municipal governments have already taken a number of steps to assist aging tenants in the social housing stock. Initiatives range from the co-ordinated provision of services to the renovation of the stock itself. Many of these initiatives could be borrowed by private sector landlords and managers if they were so inclined and if the initiative made economic sense. At the moment, most private sector managers and landlords are operating in isolation from each other, although there are a few exceptions to this general rule. The most promising avenue to help landlords and managers deal most effectively with the needs of their aging tenants appears to be associations or networks that provide useful information and encourage the sharing of information among people with similar problems and similar interests.

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Aging Tenants in the Private Rental Market

Interview Guide for Landlords and/or Managers

Date of Interview_____

Interviewer_____

Interviewee Name_____

Position (Owner/Manager)_____

Building Name_____

Building Address_____

_____

_____

Management Company_____

Management Company Address_____

_____

Phone Number_____

Fax Number_____

Part A: Building Profile

1. Age of building_____

2. Structure Type

Number of floors_____

Elevator(s)Yes_____ No_____

3. Total Number of units_____

4. What type of tenant do you target?

Any type_____
Seniors_____
Non-senior individuals or couples_____
Families_____

5. Unit composition and rents

Type of unit	Number of units	Number of occupied units	Number of Vacant Units	Rent/month
Studio (bachelor)				
1 bedroom				
2 bedroom				
3 bedroom				

6. Are the following items included in the rent?

Item	Yes/no	If no, approximate monthly cost of this item
Heat and hot water		
Lights		
Air conditioning		
Cable		
Surface Parking		
Covered Parking		
Underground Parking		
Scrambled Parking		
Reserved Parking		
Other		

7. Does the building have any of the following amenities?

Amenity	Yes	No
Balconies or patios		
In-suite storage space		
Communal storage space		
Party or recreational room		
Concierge		
Swimming pool		
Other		

8. What are the laundry arrangements? In-suite_____ Coin-operated on each floor_____ Free on each floor_____Coin-operated in one central location_____ Free in one central location_____Other (please explain)_____

_____

9. Is there a tenants' or residents' association in the building? Yes_____ No_____

Part B: Aging in Place Issues

10. Do you know if your building was designed to accommodate the changing needs of residents (e.g., grab bars in the bathrooms)? Yes_____ No, I don't know_____ No, it was not so designed_____. If yes, please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. Accessibility: which of the following design features are present in your building?

	Item	Yes	Check if this is an addition to the original building	No	Check if you are planning to add this item
Units	* are the doorways wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair/scooter?				
	* bathroom: can a person in a wheelchair use the bathroom?				
	* walk-in shower				
	* grab bars in bath				
	* knee space under sinks (specify in bathroom or kitchen)				
	* emergency call system				
	* low light switches (33-42 in.) and raised outlets (16-21 in.)				
	* hard fibre carpet and/or no carpet				
	* barrier-free access to balcony or patio (no threshold)				
	* lever handles on doors and sinks				
	* low top cabinets (at least one shelf no higher than 4 ft)				
	* roll-out cabinet shelves				
	* scooter storage				
Building entrance	* barrier free entrance (no stairs or ramp)				
	* door wide enough to accommodate wheelchair/scooter				
	* secure entry (intercom system)				
Common Areas					
	* doors wide enough to accommodate wheelchair				
	* hand rails				
	* automated doors				
	* elevator large enough for stretcher				
	* stairwells allow easy stretcher access				
	* brightly lit hallways				

12. Approximately how many of the seniors in your building drive a car?

Most of them_____
Some of them_____
Very few of them_____

13. Access to community services: how far from the building is the

	1 block or less	2-4 blocks	5 blocks or more
Bus stop?			
Rapid transit (if applicable)?			
Grocery Store?			
Medical clinic?			

14. Does your building tend to attract seniors? Yes_____ No_____ If yes, why do you think this is so?

Programs_____ Advertising_____ Location_____

Rent_____ Building Design_____ Unit Design_____

Other (please explain)_____

_____

_____

If your building does not seem to attract new seniors (as opposed to the ones already living in it), why do you think this is so?

_____

_____

15. Are you actively seeking seniors as tenants? Yes_____ No_____

Please explain why_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. Do you believe that the average age of your tenants is increasing? Yes_____
No_____ Don't know_____

17. Have you experienced any difficulty dealing with senior tenants? Yes_____ No_____
If yes, please describe the nature of the difficulties you have experienced.

_____

_____

_____

_____

18. Are any of the following services available in the building for your aging tenants?

Service	Yes	Who provides? Manager or outside agency?	No
Dedicated recreation space			
Laundry			
Housekeeping			
Meals			
Activities			
Transportation			
Resident caretaker/concierge			
Other			

19. Please describe any services available in the community that could or do assist your aging tenants:

Service	Provider

Part C: Profile of Senior Tenants

20. Approximate proportion of senior tenants: 55+_____% 65+_____% 75+_____%

21. Has this proportion changed over the last 10 years? Yes_____ No_____ Don't know_____

    If yes, please explain how_____

22. Approximate gender distribution of seniors: Male_____% Female_____%

23. Seniors living alone: _____% of senior households

24. Of single senior households, _____% female, _____% male. Average age_____

25. Approximate seniors' income distribution: Low_____% Middle_____% High____ %

26. Are some senior households in receipt of SAFER or Rent Supplement assistance? Yes_____ No_____ Don't know_____

27. Approximate length of occupancy of senior tenants:

    Less than one year_____%
    1 year to 9 years_____%
    10 years to 19 years_____%
    Over 20 years_____%

28. General state of health of senior tenants (if known):

    Generally good_____
    Fair_____
    Poor_____
    Don't know_____

Comments (if any):_____

_____

Part D: Management Profile

29. Management Firm Experience (if applicable): 0-5 yrs_____ 6-10 yrs_____ 10 yrs+_____

30. Education/training of senior property manager:

_____

CPM_____ RPA_____ FMA_____ Other_____ No formal training_____

31. Please indicate any special training in issues associated with aging:_____

_____

_____

32. If property manager is **not** an employee of a management firm:

Years of experience in property management_____

Years of experience dealing with senior tenants_____

Formal training in property management_____

Formal training in seniors' issues_____

Weekly hours of work per employment contract_____

Usual weekly hours of work_____

Annual Salary_____

Overtime paid (or time off)?Yes_____ No_____

Nature of position (full-time, part-time, contract, etc)_____

33. Does the property manager live on site? Yes_____ No_____

34. Is someone available on site 24 hours per day to handle emergencies?Yes____ No___

35. Have you ever had to deal with a tenant who became unable to continue living in your building? Yes_____ No_____. If yes, what was the reason?

Too frail_____
Mentally incompetent_____
Needed more services_____
Other_____
_____
_____
_____

36. Did you serve a notice to vacate in this case? Yes_____ No_____ Was the Arbitrator involved? Yes_____ No_____

37. Have you ever referred any of your tenants to Continuing Care? Yes_____No_____

38. Do you check on older tenants or is there a buddy system in the building? Yes, I check on older tenants_____ Yes, there is a buddy system_____

39. Do you keep a file listing the special needs of your senior tenants? Yes____ No____

40. When senior tenants leave your building, where do they typically go?

To another residential building_____
To housing with more services such as care homes_____
To acute care facilities such as hospitals_____
To live with a family member_____
Other_____

41. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not important; 5 = very important), please rate the importance of the following factors in terms of helping you deal with your aging tenants:

Factor	Not Important				Very Important
Training courses for managers in aging issues	1	2	3	4	5
An association for managers/owners of buildings with many senior tenants	1	2	3	4	5
Awareness of community resources for helping managers deal with senior tenants	1	2	3	4	5
A guide for owners/managers of buildings with many senior tenants	1	2	3	4	5

Other_____

_____

42. If a guide or document of some type were available, what should it contain? Please rank the items on the following page on a scale of 1 to 5 (1=not important, 5=very important)

Item	Not Important				Very Important
How to recognize and deal with dementia	1	2	3	4	5
Ways to retrofit buildings to accommodate the needs of aging tenants; costs	1	2	3	4	5
Available community resources	1	2	3	4	5
Landlord/tenant and human rights legislation specific to aging tenant issues	1	2	3	4	5
Sample leases for service options	1	2	3	4	5
What to do when tenants become too frail	1	2	3	4	5

Other_____

_____

Thank you very much for your cooperation and assistance. It is deeply appreciated.

Appendix Two: Case Study Interviews

Case Study #1, Vancouver

General Description and Location

Case Study #1 is a 29 storey high rise built in 1972 in Burnaby, a suburb of Vancouver. The building is ideally located for seniors – it is only steps from bus stops and a small shopping centre that contains desirable services, including a grocery store that delivers, a medical clinic, and a drugstore. The building is two blocks away from a much larger regional shopping centre and a library, and 3 blocks from Vancouver's SkyTrain system. The surrounding area is flat. There is a pleasantly landscaped drop-off in front of the building, but minimum green space around it. However a major park is only two blocks away.

Building structure:

The building contains 206 units, most of them 1 bedroom (800 square feet) and 2 bedroom (1,050 square feet). All units have balconies and there is an outdoor pool. There are no vacancies. Rents average $760 per month for the 1 bedroom units and $950 per month for the 2 bedroom units, including heat and hot water. There is no air conditioning, typical of Vancouver apartments. Parking in a secure parkade is $30 per month.

Relative to the overall Burnaby market these rents are significantly higher than average. In late 1997, rents for 1 bedroom apartments in Burnaby averaged $637 per month while those for 2 bedroom apartments averaged $791.[24]

Proportion of Seniors

Approximately 1/3 of the units are occupied by senior tenants (about 70 units). A number of the senior tenants are in wheelchairs.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although the building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, in some ways it is suitable for aging tenants:

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- The bathrooms are big enough to accommodate a wheelchair;
- There are grab bars in the bathrooms;
- The carpet is very low pile;

[24] CMHC, 1997 Rental Market Report.

- There are laundry facilities on each floor;
- There are no stairs at the entrance to the building or the parkade;
- The elevators and stairwells are probably large enough to accommodate a stretcher.[25]
- The managers act as emergency responders for any of the tenants using Lifeline.[26]

In other ways the building is less suitable:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- Access to the balcony is not possible in a wheelchair;
- There are no handrails in the building;
- Entry into the building is very difficult or impossible for an unaccompanied person in a wheelchair because it is based on a lock and key system. Tenants in wheelchairs must either travel with a companion or make sure someone will be available to open the door for them when they return to the building.

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building owners are currently renovating the area of the building adjacent to the pool, which is located on the roof of the parkade. The area will become a recreational centre for senior tenants.[27] The Building Manager is also organizing a social club for the tenants, which she hopes will "get them out of their rooms".

Although no other physical modifications are currently planned, the owners are always willing to consider requests from individual tenants for adaptations that will make their lives easier.

The Building Manager appears genuinely concerned about the welfare of the building's senior tenants. While the interview for the case study was underway, an elderly female tenant who lives alone visited the Manager for the purpose of getting drops put in her eye. She had recently had a cataract operation and could not adequately administer the drops herself. Her eye became inflamed. When the Manager noticed the eye and asked the tenant about it, she immediately offered to administer the drops herself. The tenant now visits the Manager twice a day for her drops.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Most of the senior tenants, who are generally in good health, are in their 80's and many are in their 90's. The majority are women. The senior tenants have middle range incomes that are higher than basic pension amounts, a necessity given the rent level in the building. Few of them drive.

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[25] The current managers have only recently been transferred into the building and have not had occasion to actually find out if the elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher.
[26] An emergency response system.
[27] Only seniors will be able to use the recreational centre. There are sauna areas and exercise facilities for non-senior tenants.

Management Profile

The Manager actively seeks seniors as tenants for many reasons. In her words, they are less trouble than non-seniors, they always pay their rent, they don't wreck the place, and "they are very dear".

In her opinion, the only negative aspect of senior tenants is their need and desire to have someone to talk to. But as long as boundaries are set that work for everyone (e.g., making sure senior tenants understand that the Manager and her husband, who function as a team, have many responsibilities and obligations), this does not become a serious problem.

The Manager and her husband recently relocated from Alberta, where they had 18 years of experience in property management (10 of them with seniors). The Manager has taken many courses in seniors' issues offered by the Edmonton Foundation and by the Alberta government, and has attended many conferences focused on gerontology.

She and her husband are paid less than $30,000 per year plus their apartment (which is a taxable benefit). They are on call 24 hours per day but get every other weekend off. When they are off duty, their duties are assumed by another husband and wife team who normally handle the maintenance duties.

In their years as property managers they have occasionally faced the problem of dealing with senior tenants who become incapable of living independently. They have even been faced with the necessity of eviction. In most cases however, tenants are moved to more appropriate accommodation in concert with their families and Continuing Care staff. Generally the move is to a care home.

Desirable Resources

In terms of what would help her do her job more effectively, the Manager views all the suggested initiatives very positively.

Case Study 2 Vancouver

General Description and Location

Case Study #2 is a 3 storey wood frame building built in 1993 in Langley, a distant suburb of Vancouver. Built as an upscale condo that failed to sell, the building is extremely attractive and has been very successful as an upscale rental. It is an anomaly in a neighborhood of many undistinguished entry-level condo projects interspersed with derelict single family houses clearly slated for redevelopment. Although there is a minimum of green space and landscaping in the immediate environment, a major park is a short walk away. Access to public transit and other necessary services are excellent. A regional shopping centre is about 5 blocks away.

Building structure:

The building contains 26 units, nine of them1 bedroom (750 square feet), nine of them 2 bedroom (950-1,050 square feet) and the remainder 2 bedroom plus den (1,100 square feet). Rents average $750 per month for the 1 bedroom units, $950 per month for the 2 bedroom units, and $1,100 per month for the 2 bedroom plus den units. Rent includes everything (including one underground secured parking space) except cable TV, phone and lights. There is no air conditioning.

These rents are significantly higher than the average in Langley, where 1 bedroom rents averaged $602 in October, 1997, and 2 bedroom rents averaged $729.

Although the building rarely has vacancies, the hardest units to keep filled are the 1 bedroom units. Most prospective tenants want at least 2 bedrooms.

Proportion of Seniors

Approximately 1/3 of the units are occupied by senior tenants (about 9 units)

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although the building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, in some ways it is suitable for aging tenants:

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- The bathrooms are big enough to accommodate a wheelchair;
- The two bedroom units have a shower stall;
- The owners are agreeable to tenants installing their own grab bars in the bathroom;
- There is a ramp at the entrance to the building;
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher;[28]

[28] The current managers have only recently been transferred into the building and have not had occasion to actually find out if the elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher.

- Access to the balcony is possible in a wheelchair;
- There are in-suite laundry facilities;
- There is a recreational room, although it is largely unused.

In other ways the building is less suitable:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- There are no handrails in the building;
- Carpet is standard broadloom.

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building has a party/recreational room, but no other public amenity.

Although the building's caretaker is not a resident, she is there far oftener than her employment contract requires, primarily because of her concern for the tenants.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

This building attracts younger and more affluent senior tenants than many of the other case study buildings. They appear to be looking for spacious and attractive units free of the responsibilities and obligations inherent in ownership. One couple who recently moved into the building following the sale of their large single family house were asked "what they were doing living in a rental building". They replied that owning was too much trouble at their age.

Almost 90 percent of the senior tenants are single person households, mostly female over the age of 65. Most of them drive a car and they all fall into the middle and upper income brackets.

Management Profile

The Manager actively seeks seniors as tenants for the same reasons most property managers want seniors - they are less trouble than non-seniors, they always pay their rent on time, and they care about where they live.

The only negative aspect of senior tenants according to the Manager is their tendency to be very picky. They often tend to be nosy as well.

The Manager, who has a Diploma in Urban Land Economics from the University of British Columbia as well as a Real Estate License, is an employee of a property management firm that has been in business for over 10 years. The Manager herself has over 7 years of experience in property management.

There is an on-site caretaker in addition to the Property Manager, but neither of them lives in the building. However there is a 24 hour pager system that the tenants are encouraged to use if necessary.

The Manager has occasionally faced the problem of dealing with senior tenants who become incapable of living independently. Her standard practice in these cases is to contact the family of the tenant and in all such cases, satisfactory resolution of the situation has resulted. The typical solution is movement to a care home.

Desirable Resources

In terms of what would help her do her job more effectively, the Manager views some of the suggested initiatives very positively, especially the possibility of a guide that would contain all the elements queried in Question 42.

Case Study #3 Vancouver

General Description and Location

Case Study #3 is a 3 storey wood frame structure built in 1972 in Delta, a suburb of Vancouver. The building is extremely well located for seniors – it is only steps from bus stops, grocery store and medical clinic, and a seniors' centre is just across the parking lot. A nearby bus route goes directly to a SkyTrain station. The surrounding area is flat and generally uninspiring, but the grounds of the building itself are well cared for and attractive.

Building structure:

The building contains 73 units, 5 bachelors (500 square feet), 34 1 bedroom units (700 square feet) and 34 2 bedroom (900 square feet). All units have balconies. There are currently two vacancies. Rents average $550 per month for the bachelors, $615 per month for the 1 bedroom units, and $715 per month for the 2 bedroom units, including heat, hot water and surface parking. There is no air conditioning.

Although the building is in Delta, it is very close to Surrey, another suburb of Vancouver. Current rents in both Delta and Surrey are generally lower than in the case study building, although there are exceptions to this general observation. Rents in Delta for bachelors and 1 and 2 bedroom units are $488, $609, and $767 respectively, while those in Surrey are $504, $582, and $720, also respectively.

Proportion of Seniors

About 70 percent of the units are occupied by senior tenants (50 units).

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind and in many ways is not suitable for aging tenants. The only physical features that do accommodate aging in place are:

- There are no stairs at the entrance to the building;
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher.[6]

[6] The current managers have only recently been transferred into the building and have not had occasion to actually find out if the elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher.

In most ways the building is unsuitable:

- The doorways to the units are not wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs (the Manager was in a wheelchair temporarily and is well aware of the building's limitations in terms of accessibility);
- The bathrooms are not large enough to accommodate a wheelchair;
- There are no grab bars in the bathroom (although the owners are happy to install them if a tenant so requests;
- The carpet is not suitable for wheelchairs;
- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- Access to the balcony is not possible in a wheelchair;
- There are no handrails in the building;

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

In spite of the physical limitations of the building, it appears to offer a very satisfactory environment for its aging tenants, partly because it is affordable, partly because of its location, and partly because the Manager and her husband clearly care about their tenants.

Rents in the building are low enough that SAFER benefits are available to many tenants. Although the availability of SAFER is not mentioned in the advertisements for the building, the Manager makes sure that prospective senior tenants are aware of the program and many tenants are in receipt of SAFER benefits.

In addition, senior tenants are only required to make a $100 deposit instead of the standard half a month's rent.

The Manager and her husband work hard to make sure the building is clean and attractive. The Manager's husband does all the gardening and landscaping and the results of his labors are obvious – there are flowers everywhere. The Manager says the senior tenants love her husband "once they get past the tattoos".

The Manager knows all the tenants and is always aware of their general well-being.

There are two laundry rooms, one on either end of the building on the first floor.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Most of the senior tenants, who are generally in good health, are over 65 and a number are much older. Almost all of them are women, almost all live alone, and almost all are low income. Very few of them drive.

Many of the tenants are receiving Homemaker Services but the Manager strongly believes that the time available to the tenants (1½ hours twice a week) is totally inadequate.

Many of the tenants are receiving Homemaker Services but the Manager strongly believes that the time available to the tenants (1½ hours twice a week) is totally inadequate.

Management Profile

The Manager actively seeks seniors as tenants. She thinks seniors are "wonderful" tenants who do not create any wear and tear on the Manager. "They're in bed by 9:00." They tend to stay for a long time and they always pay their rent promptly. She would love to have the building completely filled with seniors.

The Manager and her husband, who function as a team, have worked in property management for over 20 years. They have had no formal training in property management or in issues associated with aging.

She and her husband are paid between $30,000 and $40,000 per year (including their apartment, a taxable benefit). They are on call 24 hours per day but get the weekends off. On the weekends there is a relief Manager who works 6 hours on Saturday and 6 hours on Sunday. An answering service is available for the rest of the weekend.

In their years as property managers they have occasionally faced the problem of dealing with senior tenants who become incapable of living independently. They have even been faced with the necessity of eviction (alcohol abuse). In most cases however, tenants are moved to more appropriate accommodation in concert with their families and Continuing Care staff. Generally the move is to a care home.

Desirable Resources

In terms of what would help her do her job more effectively, the Manager views all the suggested initiatives very positively.

Case Study #4: Vancouver

General Description and Location

Case Study #4 is actually a composite of 10 rental buildings in Vancouver, 8 of them in the West End. The West End is a densely populated area of central Vancouver adjacent to downtown and Stanley Park. All the Case Study #4 buildings in the West End are high rises. The West End is an ideal location for seniors – it is well served by public transit, there are a variety of commercial services in the neighborhood, and the major recreational amenities of Stanley Park and English Bay are nearby.

Building structure:

The eight West End buildings range in size from 40 to 88 units. All units have balconies. Vacancies are unusual. Rents range from $685 per month for the cheapest bachelor units to $1,250 per month for the most expensive 2 bedroom units, including heat and hot water. There is no air conditioning, typical of Vancouver apartments. Parking in a secure parkade is either $25 or $35 per month.

Relative to the overall West End market, these rents are somewhat more expensive. In late 1997, rents for bachelor units in the West End averaged $616, while those for 1 and 2 bedroom apartments averaged $742 and $1,068 per month respectively.[7]

Proportion of Seniors

Senior tenants occupy about 20 percent of the units in the eight West End buildings. New senior tenants are rare, primarily because so few can afford the rents. Most of the senior tenants have been in place for many years, in one case for 30 years.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The buildings were not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, and in only a few respects are particularly suitable for aging tenants:

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- Grab bars have been installed in some bathrooms;
- Some of the units have hardwood floors. In carpeted units, thicker pile carpeting has been replaced with thinner pile, although for reasons unrelated to the needs of aging tenants;
- Entrances are barrier-free.

[7] CMHC, 1997 Rental Market Report.

In other ways the building are less suitable:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- Access to the balconies are not possible in a wheelchair;
- There are no handrails in the buildings;

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

All the buildings have exercise rooms, although only one has a pool. Laundry in all buildings is coin operated in one central location.

The property managers for these buildings operate from a central office location, not within the buildings themselves. They do not know their tenants except in unusual circumstances. They do not target senior tenants.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Most of the senior tenants, who are generally in fair health, are women in their 80's. The Property Manager does not know what the income profile of the senior tenants is, but in view of the high rent levels in the buildings, it is probably mid tohigh.

Management Profile

The firm managing these case study buildings has been in business for more than 10 years. The Senior Property Manager has an RPA, but no special training in seniors' issues.

The firm has experienced some difficulties with senior tenants, incontinence for example. Staff has had to obtain special products to deal with the smells associated with incontinence. The staff has also had to deal with some cases of tenants becoming unable to continue living in the buildings, cases that on occasion have involved the Public Trustee.

Desirable Resources

In terms of what would help the firm in terms of dealing most effectively with senior tenants, the Manager identified a guide and an increased awareness of community resources as top priorities.

Case Study 5 Vancouver

General Description and Location

Case Study #5 is a 20 storey high rise built in 1970 in the West End, a densely populated area of central Vancouver adjacent to downtown and Stanley Park. The West End is an ideal location for seniors and this building is especially well located – it is half a block from the major artery of Denman Street and directly across the street from a community centre that offers programs for seniors. It is a pleasant two block walk to another neighborhood seniors' centre, Barclay Manor.

Building structure:

The building contains 138 units, 60 of them studios (500 square feet), 69 of them 1 bedroom units (600-690 square feet) and 9 of them 2 bedroom units (800-1,100 square feet). Rents range between $600 and $685 per month for the studios, between $800 and $950 for the 1 bedroom units, and between $995 and $1,325 per month for the 2 bedroom units. Rent includes heat and hot water. Secure parking in a parkade is $25 per month. There is no air conditioning.

These rents are higher than average in the overall West End market. In late 1997, rents for bachelor units in the West End averaged $616, while those for 1 and 2 bedroom apartments averaged $742 and $1,068 per month respectively.[8]

Although vacancies are unusual, there has been more turnover in recent months caused by Asian investors renting condominium units at very low rents.

Proportion of Seniors

About 70 percent of the buildings' tenants are seniors.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although the building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, in some ways it is suitable for aging tenants:

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- The bathrooms are big enough to accommodate a wheelchair;
- The owners are agreeable to tenants installing their own grab bars in the bathroom;
- There are no stairs at building entrance;
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher;[9]

[8] CMHC, 1997 Rental Market Report.

[9] The current managers have only recently been transferred into the building and have not had occasion to actually find out if the elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher.

- The managers act as emergency responders for any of the tenants using Lifeline.[10]

In other ways the building is less suitable:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- There are no handrails in the building;
- Carpet is standard broadloom.
- Access to the balcony is not possible in a wheelchair;
- Access to the building is via a key system.

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The Building Manager is actively involved in seniors' affairs in the West End. She is on the board of Seniors' West End Living (SWEL), a local seniors' organization.

It is policy in the building that any senior tenant who has lived in the building for 10 years or more has their rent increases frozen. Seniors who have lived in the building for less than 10 years but who are "struggling" may also have their rent increases frozen.

In terms of phyical attributes, the building has an outdoor pool, but no other public amenity. Laundry is coin-operated in one central location.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

The average age of seniors in the building is 75+. Nearly all are women and all households but one are single person households. Some drive a car. Their health is generally good.

The Manager is not aware of the general income profile of the senior tenants but advised that a few receive SAFER benefits.[11]

Management Profile

Although senior tenants are not actively sought, the building does tend to attract them because of its location, its appearance, and its security features (surveillance cameras in the lobby for example). In general, the Manager is very positive about seniors as tenants, but has become frustrated with her inability to get help for her aging tenants when she thinks they need it. For example, she is currently dealing with a tenant who has become very forgetful about turning off taps. She has another tenant who frequently gives her money away to strangers. Neither of these tenants has any family members able or willing to help.

[10] An emergency response system.
[11] Shelter Aid for Elderly Residents, a rent supplement program operated by the Province of British Columbia.

The Manager has tried to get assistance from the City on numerous occasions, but has been told that unless the tenants' suite is a hazard from a public health point of view, nothing can be done.

The Manager has a high school diploma and 3 years of experience in property management. Although she has no formal training in seniors' issues, her involvement with SWEL has provided her with useful information. She and her husband, who earn between $30,000 and $40,000 between them, plus a rent-free unit in the building, work directly for the owners of the building, a company based in Germany.

Desirable Resources

In terms of what would help her do her job more effectively, the Manager views all of the suggested initiatives very positively, including the possibility of a guide that would contain all the elements queried in Question 42.

Case Study 6 Chilliwack

General Description and Location

Case Study 36 is a 3 storey wood frame building built in 1977 in Chilliwack, a municipality located about 60 kilometres east of Vancouver in the Fraser Valley. Chilliwack is considered part of the Lower Mainland. The building is located in central Chilliwack and access to public transit and other necessary services is excellent.

Building structure:

The building contains 42 units, 33 of them1 bedroom units (874 square feet), and nine of them 2 bedroom units (1,085 square feet). Rents range from $500 to $550 per month for the 1 bedroom units, and $595 to 635 per month for the 2 bedroom units. Rent includes everything (including one covered parking space) except cable TV, phone, and lights. There is no air conditioning.

These rents are about average for Chilliwack, where 1 bedroom rents averaged $462 in October, 1997, and 2 bedroom rents averaged $601.

Proportion of Seniors

Senior tenants occupy approximately 70 percent of the units. The building's owner is actively trying to increase this proportion

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although the building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, in some ways it is suitable for aging tenants:

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- The owners are agreeable to tenants installing their own grab bars in the bathroom;
- There is a ramp at the entrance to the building;
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher;[12]
- Access to the balcony is possible in a wheelchair;
- The carpet is low pile,

In other ways the building is less suitable:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- There are no handrails in the building;

[12] The current managers have only recently been transferred into the building and have not had occasion to actually find out if the elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher.

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building's owner actively seeks senior tenants, whom he regards as "great tenants". He tries to accommodate his senior tenants and to keep the building in top condition. The resident caretaker is paid very well and acts in effect as a part-time caregiver.

There are no public amenities. Laundry is coin operated on each floor.

To the owner's regret, the proportion of senior tenants in the building has been declining in recent years. The Building Owner suspects that this has something to do with the rising incidence of crime in Chilliwack, as well as with the very soft nature of the overall market (vacancy rates in excess of 10 percent), which has led to fierce competition among landlords.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

The majority of the senior tenants are over 75. Almost 85 percent of them are single person households, 95 percent of them female. About 1/3 drive a car and they are all in the lower income bracket.

Management Profile

The Manager actively seeks seniors as tenants for the same reasons most property managers want seniors - they are less trouble than non-seniors, they always pay their rent on time, and they care about where they live.

There is a resident caretaker in the building who is paid "above scale" in order to help ensure the satisfaction of the senior tenants.

The Caretaker and Building Owner have occasionally faced the problem of dealing with senior tenants who become incapable of living independently. Their standard practice in these cases is to contact the family of the tenant and in all such cases, satisfactory resolution of the situation has resulted. The typical solution is movement to a care home.

Desirable Resources

In terms of what would help the on-site staff to do their job more effectively, the Owner views all of the suggested initiatives very positively, especially the possibility of a guide that would contain all the elements queried in Question 42.

Case Study #7: Vancouver

General Description and Location

Case Study #7 is a composite of 5 rental buildings in Vancouver, all located in the Kerrisdale area, a long-established upper income area on the west side of Vancouver. Although in many respects Kerrisdale is an ideal neighborhood for seniors, it is expensive and it has recently lost its supermarket. Senior tenants of Case Study 7 buildings are no longer able to walk to a grocery store.

Building structure:

The five buildings are all at least 25 years old, some high rise and some low rise. Vacancies are very unusual – as the Senior Property Manager put it "If we have a vacancy there's a problem. Kerrisdale has the tightest rental market in the world". Rents range between $600 and $700 per month for the studios, between $700 and $900 for the 1 bedroom units, and between $1,100 and $1,400 per month for the 2 bedroom units. Rent includes heat and hot water. Secure parking in a parkade is $25 per month. There is no air conditioning.

Compared to the overall market in Kerrisdale, which has the highest rents in the City of Vancouver, these rents are about average. In late 1997, rents for bachelor units in Kerrisdale averaged $605, while those for 1 and 2 bedroom apartments averaged $786 and $1,141 per month respectively.[13]

The Senior Property Manager is aware of tenants whose incomes are not high enough to comfortably afford their rent, but who are so reluctant to leave the neighborhood that they are willing to commit a disproportionate amount of their income to rent payments so they do not have to move.

Proportion of Seniors

The proportion of senior tenants is variable, although they are a significant group in all buildings. Non-senior tenants are typically single professionals or professional couples. As explained at greater length in the next section, senior tenants are not actively sought and in fact, after a certain age, are actively discouraged from moving in because of concerns about liability issues. In the context of a very tight rental market and in view of the ease of filling units with other "desirable" tenants such as professional couples, senior tenants are not regarded with the same favour as they sometimes are in buildings that may be a little more difficult to keep full.

[13] CMHC, 1997 Rental Market Report.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The buildings were not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, and in only a few respects are particularly suitable for aging tenants:

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- Grab bars have been installed in some bathrooms;
- The units often have hardwood floors.
- Entrances are barrier-free.
- Ramps have been installed in some cases to allow balcony access;

In other ways the building are less suitable:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- Access to the balconies is not usually possible in a wheelchair;
- There are no handrails in the buildings..

Of great concern to management is the fact that elevators are old and often break down, frequently for fairly protracted periods. Since typical criss-cross stairwells will not accommodate stretchers, there is great concern about the possibility of a medical emergency occurring while an elevator is out of commission. Management is concerned about the impact of such a situation on the tenant, and is also concerned about potential liability.

Other potential liability issues are also of concern, such as overflowing bathtubs damaging valuable items in apartments below, and tenants tripping and falling because of uneven surfaces in older buildings.

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Most buildings do not have a party/recreational room, but about half have pools. Laundry facilities are equally split between coin operations on each floor and coin operations in one central location.

The property managers for these buildings operate from a central office location, not within the buildings themselves. They do not know their tenants except in unusual circumstances. As discussed, they do not target senior tenants.

Usually there is a resident caretaker, or at a minimum, a resident staff person in another company-managed building within a block.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Most of the senior tenants, who are generally in fair health, are women between 65 and 75 living alone. Most have middle or higher level incomes, although some must really struggle to pay the rent in the case study buildings.

Management Profile

The firm managing these case study buildings has been in business for more than 10 years. The Senior Property Manager has a B.Comm, and a CPM, but no special training in seniors' issues.

On-site staff generally have at least a high school education and many have some post-secondary education. Over the last 4 or 5 years, many of the on-site staff hired have been tradesmen (electricians, plumbers, and so on) from Eastern Europe. Six years ago approximately 10 percent of the on-site staff were Eastern Europeans; today 25 percent are.

Resident caretakers earn between $2,000 and $3,000 per month for a building with more than 60 suites. If a couple is required, they generally earn $4,000 per month between them. Free rent is not an additional benefit, although resident caretakers are paid $100 per month as compensation for business use of their apartment. Free rent is considered by Revenue Canada to be a taxable benefit in any case.

As discussed, senior tenants are not targeted by management and beyond a certain age are discouraged from moving in. In addition to the liability concerns already expressed, senior tenants "can sometimes be very demanding and very quick to fly off the handle".

The firm would not however issue an eviction notice to a senior tenant who had become incapable of living alone unless there were absolutely no other way of dealing with the situation. The first step is always the children, if there are any. A difficulty noted by the Senior Property Manager in terms of alternative possibilities for aging tenants is that there are so few – public facilities have long waiting lists and private facilities are very expensive.

Desirable Resources

In terms of what would help the firm in terms of dealing most effectively with senior tenants, the Senior Property Manager identified a guide and an increased awareness of community resources as top priorities. "Who do you call for help?"

The Manager raised a concern about how far the owners and managers of a private rental building could reasonably go to help aging tenants. As he put it: "Our job is to do rental housing – we are not a care facility."

Case Study #8 Vancouver

General Description and Location

Case Study #8 is a 3 storey wood frame structure built in 1978 in Surrey, a suburb of Vancouver. The building is extremely well located for seniors – it is only steps from bus stops, a grocery store that delivers, and a medical clinic. A SkyTrain station is 6 blocks away over level ground, accessible by walking (for the fit), or by bus. Case Study #8 is one of three commonly owned buildings located on three sides of a square. The fourth side is a small shopping centre. A large grassy area and garden plots occupy the centre of the square. The grounds of the building itself are well cared for and attractively landscaped.

Building structure:

The building contains 61 units, all 1 bedroom units. All units have balconies and there are no vacancies. Rents range from $365 month to $520 per month, depending on whether or not the unit has been upgraded. Utilities are extra. Heat and hydro cost about $30 per month on average, year round. There is no charge for parking on the surface lot, primarily because of frequent vandalism. There is no air conditioning.

The average 1 bedroom apartment rents for $582 in Surrey.

Although the rents in the case study building are attractive, particularly for the units that have not been upgraded, the fact that there are no 2 bedroom apartments is viewed as unfortunate by the Manager and also by many prospective tenants who would prefer a 2 bedroom unit.

Proportion of Seniors

Most of the tenants are seniors. At one time **all** the tenants were seniors, but increasing vacancies forced the owner to bring in younger tenants. There are now a few tenants around the age of 50.

Demand from seniors has fallen off over the last few years. The Manager believes that part of the reason for increasing vacancies is that some prospective tenants have been buying condos as prices have fallen all over British Columbia, Vancouver included.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, the building is suitable in some ways for aging tenants. Several tenants are in wheelchairs.

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- The bathrooms are big enough to accommodate a wheelchair;

- There are grab bars in many of the bathrooms, which are installed at no charge to the tenant;
- There are lever handles on many of the sinks and more are being added as time goes on;
- There are no stairs at the entrance to the building;
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher.[14]
- The managers act as emergency responders for any of the tenants using Lifeline.[15]

In other ways the building is less suitable:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights. This is described by the Manager as the source of many complaints;
- Access to the balcony is not possible in a wheelchair;
- There are no handrails in the building;
- Entry into the building is difficult for an unaccompanied person in a wheelchair because the door is not automated;
- The carpet, which is similar to indoor/outdoor carpeting, is not especially suitable for wheelchairs, although several tenants use wheelchairs, or for shufflers. It tends to ripple;
- There are no 2 bedroom units.
- There is a fair amount of vandalism in the neighborhood.

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

In spite of the physical limitations of the building, it appears to offer a very satisfactory environment for its aging tenants, partly because it is affordable, partly because of its location, and partly because the Manager and his wife clearly care about their tenants. The interview was held with the husband only because his wife was out driving one of their tenants to a medical appointment.

Rents in the building are low enough that SAFER benefits are available to many tenants, although the Manager is distressed that so few people are aware of the existence of the program.

Many of the tenants are receiving homemaker assistance, but there is apparently no coordination of the services coming into the building.

There is a party/recreational room but no other public amenity. Laundry is coin operated in once central location.

[14] The current managers have only recently been transferred into the building and have not had occasion to actually find out if the elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher.
[15] An emergency response system.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Most of the senior tenants, who are generally in good health, are over 70. Unusually, only about 60% of the senior tenants are women, and only about half the senior tenants live alone. The fact that half the senior households consist of more than one person is even more remarkable in view of the fact that there are no 2 bedroom units in the building.

Although most of the senior tenants are in generally good health, there are a number with fairly serious health problems. Some are on oxygen, some are deaf, and some are blind. Six are on a waiting list for a bed in a care home.

About half the senior tenants have low incomes (OAS and GIS only), about a third have middle level incomes, and the remainder have high incomes. About 40% of them drive.

Management Profile

The Manager actively seeks seniors as tenants.

The Manager and his wife, who function as a team, have worked in property management and with seniors for 14 years. They have had no formal training in property management or in issues associated with aging. They are paid "a pretty good salary", although they are on call 24 hours per day 7 days per week. They used to have weekend relief but the last relief person left and they are searching for the right replacement.

In their years as property managers they have occasionally faced the problem of dealing with senior tenants who become incapable of living independently. They have had to resort to eviction twice. In most cases however, tenants are moved to more appropriate accommodation in concert with their families and Continuing Care staff. Generally the move is to a care home.

Desirable Resources

In terms of what would help the Manager and his wife do their job more effectively, the Manager does not believe any of the suggested options would be useful. He believes they have learned what they needed to learn on the job.

Case Study #9 Vancouver

General Description and Location

Case Study #9 is a 20 storey high rise built in 1979 in Surrey, a suburb of Vancouver. The building is ideally located for seniors – it is only steps from a major artery and a major regional shopping centre with an adjacent seniors' centre. A SkyTrain (rapid transit) station is across the street. The surrounding area is flat but there is minimum green space around the building.

Building structure:

The building contains 266 units, 148 of them 1 bedroom, and 87 of them 2 bedroom. There are also 31 studio units. All units have balconies and indoor storage space. There are no vacancies. Rents range from $515 to $580 for the studio units, $550-$625 for the one bedroom units, and $670-$795 for the 2 bedroom units, including hot water. Electricity for lights and heat is extra and costs about $25-$35 per month. There is no air conditioning, typical of Vancouver apartments. Parking in a secure parkade is $20 per month.

Relative to the overall Surrey market these rents are about average. The average 1 bedroom apartment rents for $582 in Surrey, the average 2 bedroom for $720, and the average studio for $504.

Proportion of Seniors

Approximately 50% of the units are occupied by senior tenants.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although the building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, in a few ways it is suitable for aging tenants:

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- There are no stairs at the entrance to the building or the parkade;
- The elevators and stairwells are probably large enough to accommodate a stretcher.[16]

In other ways the building is less suitable:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- Access to the balcony is not possible in a wheelchair;

[16] The current managers have only recently been transferred into the building and have not had occasion to actually find out if the elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher.

- There are no handrails in the building;
- A person in a wheelchair would have difficulty using the bathrooms in most units;

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

There are two designated party/recreational rooms for the use of senior tenants only. Non-senior tenants are expected to use the sauna and hot tub. Laundry facilities are coin operated on each floor.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Most of the senior tenants, who are generally in good health, are about 70, although one tenant is 99. Three-quarters of them are women. About half the senior tenants have low incomes and about half middle range incomes. Some are in receipt of SAFER benefits. About 50 percent of them drive.

Management Profile

Building management actively seeks seniors as tenants (and offers them a small discount on their rent) because they are considered to be less trouble than non-senior tenants.

The resident manager has been working in the property management field for 20 years, 12 of them in buildings with significant numbers of seniors. He often has to deal with tenants who are too frail or otherwise unable to continue living on their own – tenants who become confused and go to the wrong floors or the wrong suite. In most cases however, tenants are moved to more appropriate accommodation in concert with their families and Continuing Care staff. Generally the move is to a care home.

Desirable Resources

In terms of what would help him do his job more effectively, the Manager does not believe a training course or an association would be useful, but thought that greater awareness of community resources, possibly transmitted in a guide of some sort, would be quite useful. His major concern is with dementia – how to recognize it and what to do about tenants who develop mental disorders.

Case Study 10 Vancouver

General Description and Location

A 3 storey wood frame building built in the late 1960's in Langley, a distant suburb of Vancouver. The building is standard quality construction for that era, but the grounds and the landscaping, which are extensive, are very attractive. The building is less than a block from bus stop, grocery store, and medical clinic, and a few blocks from a major regional mall.

Building structure:

The building contains 37 units, five of them studios, 28 of them1 bedroom units, and 4 of them 2 bedroom units. The Manager, who was new to the building, could only report that the 2 bedroom units were between 1,000 and 1,100 square feet in size. Rents average $550 per month for the studios, $610 per month for the 1 bedroom units, and $710 per month for the 2 bedroom units. Rent includes everything (including one surface parking space) except phone. There is no air conditioning.

These rents are very close to average in Langley, where 1 bedroom rents averaged $602 in October, 1997, and 2 bedroom rents averaged $729.

The building has no vacancies.

Proportion of Seniors

Approximately 75 to 80 percent of the units are occupied by senior tenants.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although the building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, in some ways it is suitable for aging tenants:

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- The bathrooms are big enough to accommodate a wheelchair;
- The owners are agreeable to tenants installing their own grab bars in the bathroom, or to any other modification that would make life easier for people with disabilities;
- The entrance to the building is barrier-free;
- The stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher, although the elevators are not;
- There are hardwood floors in the units;
- Access to the balcony may be possible in a wheelchair (there is a very low lip);

In other ways the building is less suitable:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- There are no handrails in the building;

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

There are no public amenities, although the building is surrounded by ample green space and gardens. Unusually, laundry facilities are free.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Tenants range in age from 50 to 98. Many of them are very active and a considerable number drive a car. About three-quarters of the senior tenants are women and a similar three-quarters live alone. Some receive SAFER benefits.

Management Profile

The Manager and the Building Owner actively seeks seniors as tenants for the same reasons most property managers want seniors - they are less trouble than non-seniors, they always pay their rent on time, and they care about where they live.

The Manager is new to property management, and has had no formal or informal training. She works 7 days per week and is on call 24 hours per day. She does not get the weekends off. She earns under $30,000 per year and pays the standard rent for her apartment.

Desirable Resources

Although it is really too soon for the Manager to comment on what might make her job easier, she thought that a training course would be very useful.

Case Study #11 – Vancouver

General Description and Location

Case Study #11 is somewhat anomalous in that it is not strictly speaking a private rental building. It was originally financed under the terms of an early government program, although the mortgage has been paid off (the building is 40 years old). Tenants must qualify on the basis of income (less than $25,000 per yea) and must be at least 50.

Building structure:

The building contains 21 units on two floors and a basement. There is no elevator. Eleven of the units are studios and 10 are 1 bedroom. Although exact square footages are not available, the units are described as "small". Rents are $240 per month for the studios and $340 per month for the 1 bedroom units, including heat, hot water, and cable.

These rents are far below average rents in the Vancouver market, where the least expensive 1 bedroom unit rented for $568 in October, 1997.

Vacancies are extremely unusual.

Proportion of Seniors

Two-thirds of the tenants are seniors.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although the building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, in some ways it is suitable for aging tenants:

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- The bathrooms are big enough to accommodate a wheelchair;
- The owners are agreeable to tenants installing their own grab bars in the bathroom;
- Although there are stairs at the building entrance, there is a ramp at the back;
- The stairwell is large enough to accommodate a stretcher;
- The floors are linoleum and tile.

In other ways the building is less suitable:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- There are no handrails in the building;
- There are no showers (only bathtubs).

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

None.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

The average age of seniors in the building is 60+. Except for one man, all are women and all households but one are single person households. Very few drive a car. Their health is generally good.

All tenants are low income (by definition). None is in receipt of SAFER benefits (not needed because of low rents).

Management Profile

The building is managed by a commercial management company, although there is a resident manager.

Desirable Resources

A guide might be useful.

Case Study #12 Victoria

General Description and Location

Case Study #12 in Victoria is a 4 storey wood frame structure built in the mid-1970's. Somewhat unusually for private rental buildings, it was originally designed and built for tenants over the age of 55 and it has always operated on that basis. The building is ideally located for seniors – it is only steps from the bus stop and other services such as a medical clinic and grocery store. An adult day care is located on the main floor. The surrounding area is flat and the grounds of the building are pleasantly landscaped.

Building structure:

The building contains 119 units, two-thirds of which are small bachelor units (approximately 400 square feet). This unusual unit configuration is probably due to the fact that the building was designed 30 years ago for seniors, at a time when the desirability of space was not as widely recognized as it is today. However, all units have balconies. As well, all the units on the ground floor are handicapped units.

There are 14 vacancies in the building, all bachelors. There is often a waiting list for the 1 bedroom units. Rents average $400 per month for the bachelor units, $525 for the 1 bedroom units and $650 per month for the four 2 bedroom units, including hot water. Underground parking is $15 per month.

Relative to the overall Victoria market these rents are lower than average. In late 1997, rents for 1 bedroom apartments in Victoria averaged $467 per month for bachelors, $572 per month for one bedroom units, and $740 per month for 2 bedroom apartments.[17]

Proportion of Seniors

All units are occupied by seniors.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Because the building was originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, it is generally more suitable for aging tenants than most private rental buildings:

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- The bathrooms are big enough to accommodate a wheelchair;
- The building contains handicapped units on the ground floor;
- There are grab bars in some of the other bathrooms;
- There are laundry facilities on three of four floors;
- There are no stairs at the entrance to the building or the parkade;

[17] CMHC, 1997 Rental Market Report.

- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher.
- The building contains a variety of amenities for its tenants;
- There are handrails in the hallways

In other ways the building is less suitable:

- Except for the handicapped units, cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Except for the handicapped units, handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- Access to the balcony is not possible in a wheelchair;

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

There are a variety of amenities in the building – a lounge where free coffee is served all day, a library, a games room, an exercise room, and a craft room. Both a pool table and a shuffleboard table are available. Garden plots are also available, although not enough to meet the demand. Card games are played regularly in the public areas and birthday parties are organized for residents. There are two laundry rooms per floor. Laundry is coin operated

The building was purchased a year ago by a multinational company based in the US. The company appears to be supportive of the husband/wife management team in their efforts to respond to the needs of their senior tenants. For example, a barbecue was recently installed in the gazebo and the managers have been organizing barbecues.

The tenants themselves frequently organize bake sales and craft sales.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Most of the senior tenants, who are generally in fair health, are retired, but some are still working. About 60 percent are women and most tenants, men and women, live alone. Only a few of the tenants are in receipt of SAFER benefits.

Management Profile

The Manager and her husband having been working in the property management field for 6 years, although the Manager has 15 years of experience working in a nursing home.

She and her husband, who get the weekends off, are guaranteed an annual salary of $30,000 between them. The $600 per month rent on their apartment is not included in this amount. They can however earn extra money for doing maintenance work around the building, such as painting suites.

In their years as property managers they have not yet had to face the problem of dealing with senior tenants who become incapable of living independently.

Desirable Resources

In terms of what would help them do their job more effectively, both the Manager views all the suggested initiatives very positively.

Case Study #13 Victoria

General Description and Location

Case Study #13 in Victoria is a 4 storey wood frame structure built in the late 1960's. The building is externally very attractive. It is ideally located for seniors on a fairly major artery, across the street from the bus stop and very close to other services such as a medical clinic and grocery store. It is also close to several churches, which appeals to many seniors, as well as to a care home that runs day programs for seniors. The surrounding area is flat and the grounds of the building are pleasantly landscaped.

Building structure:

The building contains 44 units, 42 of which are one bedroom units, all with balconies. There are 3 sizes of units, although all are fairly compact. The largest unit has a defined dining room area. Kitchens are very small.

There are 4 vacancies in the building. Rents range from $535 per month for the smallest unit to $555 per month for the largest. Hot water heat with individual controls is included in the rent, electricity is extra (roughly $15 per month). Surface parking is $10 per month.

Relative to the overall Victoria market these rents are somewhat below average. In late 1997, rents for 1 bedroom apartments in Victoria averaged $572 per month while those for 2 bedroom apartments averaged $740.[18]

Proportion of Seniors

Approximately 30 percent of the units are occupied by seniors.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although the building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, in some ways it is suitable for aging tenants:

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- The bathroom is apparently large enough to accommodate a wheelchair because some tenants are in wheelchairs. However, they do not look large enough.
- Access to the balcony is possible in a wheelchair;
- The carpet is low pile in some of the units;
- There is a ramp at the entrance to the building;
- The elevators and stairwells are probably large enough to accommodate a stretcher

In other ways the building is less suitable:

[18] CMHC, 1997 Rental Market Report.

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- Carpeting in some of the units is sculptured;
- Carpeting in the hallways is old and not smooth in places.

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building is owned by a local couple and managed by a local management company. The Resident Manager appears to be very supportive of the needs of her senior tenants (she checks on them if she hasn't seen them for a day or so), but the owner is evidently not interested in making any changes to the building that would better accommodate the needs of senior tenants, such as replacing the carpeting in the hallways (which is old and uneven).

There is no communal space in the building, such as a party or a recreational room, and no pool or sauna. Laundry is coin-operated in one central location.

Senior tenants are not actively sought, but the building attracts them because of its location. The Resident Manager would like to increase the proportion of seniors in the building because prefers them as tenants.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Except for one couple, all the senior tenants are women living alone. Two receive SAFER benefits, but the rest appear to have fairly good incomes.

Management Profile

The Resident Manager has been working in the property management field for 5 years, and has a CRM designation.

She earns $1,500 per month, out of which she pays $500 per month in rent. She does not get the weekends off and is on call 24 hours per day 7 days per week.

In her years as a property manager she has from time to time faced the problem of dealing with senior tenants who have become incapable of living independently. In all such cases she has been able to enlist the help of family members who have persuaded the senior to move.

Desirable Resources

In terms of what would help them do their job more effectively, the Manager thought that training courses and an association would be most useful. If a guide of some sort were available, she would consider all suggested contents of high priority.

Case Study #14 Victoria

General Description and Location

Case Study #14 in Victoria is a 14 storey high rise, one of a pair of adjacent buildings located a short distance from Victoria's harbour and downtown The case study building is exclusively seniors, the other is 50 percent seniors. Both are ideally situated a short distance off a bus route and across the street from an attractively designed shopping centre containing among other services a major grocery store that delivers.

Building structure:

The building contains 145 units, 97 of which are one bedroom units ranging from 640 to 700 square feet, all with balconies, and the remainder of which are two bedroom units (all 900 square feet). There are 5 vacancies in the building. Rents range from $595 per month for the smallest one bedroom unit to $700 per month for the largest. Two bedroom units rent for $800 to $900 per month depending on location in the building. Heat and hot water are included in the rent. Surface parking is $15 per month.

Relative to the overall Victoria market these rents are a little lower than average. In late 1997, rents for 1 bedroom apartments in Victoria averaged $572 per month while those for 2 bedroom apartments averaged $740.[19]

Proportion of Seniors

100 percent.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although the building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, in some ways it is suitable for aging tenants.

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters,
- The bathrooms are large enough to accommodate wheelchairs (several tenants are in wheelchairs.).
- The carpet is low pile in some of the units,
- Two of the units have been remodeled extensively to accommodate disabled tenants,
- The building undergoes a continuous process of upgrading, which includes brighter lights. However, although the bathrooms are all being redone over time, lever handles are not being installed.
- There is a ramp at the entrance to the building,
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher

[19] CMHC, 1997 Rental Market Report.

In other ways the building is less suitable:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- Access to the balcony is not possible in a wheelchair.

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building has a billiards room, a lounge with a shuffleboard, card tables and chairs, a TV and a record play. The lounge overlooks the pool and garden area. The central laundry room is across the hall from the billiards room. It is large and airy and open 24 hours per day. It contains a hair dryer and ironing board as well as washers and dryers. It is a focal point for socializing by residents.

The building is owned by a Vancouver family. The current Manager's husband died recently and she will retire as soon as the owners are able to find suitable replacements. The Manager is sensitive to the needs of her tenants and knows them all by name. Any of the tenants who want to can register with the local community police station, which arranges a daily volunteer phone call service. The Manager is the point of contact for all tenants who do not have anyone else to rely on and she has their permission to enter their suite if the phone call is not answered. .

Many of the tenants receive homemaker service, some as often as three times per day, and some have 24 hour private nursing care. Some have locks on both sides of their doors because they have become incapable of going outside their unit on their own. Several tenants have told the Manager that they would rather die than move. The critical factor for the Manager is the point at which tenants are no longer capable of getting out of bed and going to the bathroom on their own.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Only about 60 percent of the tenants are women but almost all live alone A few are in receipt of SAFER benefits, but most have middle to higher level incomes.

Management Profile

The Manager has been working in the property management field for 9 years.

She and her husband, who recently died, were paid over $40,000 per year. The Manager works 5 days per week although she is on call 24 hours per day on the days she is working.

Desirable Resources

In terms of what would help her do her job more effectively, the Manager thought a guide would be the most useful tool. In terms of the guide's contents, she does not believe it should contain information on retrofitting because she does not consider that appropriate for the type of accommodation her building provides, that is, accommodation for people who can care for themselves. If the building became more accommodating for people with greater needs, she is worried that the demands on the Manager would become overwhelming.

Case Study #15 Victoria

General Description and Location

Case Study #15 in Victoria is a 34 year old 4 storey wood frame structure. The building is externally very attractive. It is ideally located for seniors – very close to two different bus routes and within two blocks of all services. It is also close to several churches, which appeals to many seniors, as well as to a seniors' centre that runs day programs for seniors. The surrounding area is flat and the grounds of the building are pleasantly landscaped. Some of the landscaping is done by tenants (tenant participation as the Manager describes it). The surrounding neighborhood is one of the most popular in Victoria for seniors.

Building structure:

The building contains 34 units, 18 one bedroom units (approximately 700 square feet), and 16 two bedroom units (approximately 850 square feet). All units above the first floor have balconies. There have been no vacancies for 3 ½ years. In fact, there is a waiting list.

Rents range from $580 per month for the one bedroom units to $695 per month for the two bedroom units.. Heat and hot water are included in the rent, which according to the Manager is much appreciated by tenants on tight incomes. One surface parking space is included in the rent.

Relative to the overall Victoria market these rents are a little lower than average. In November 1997, rents for 1 bedroom apartments in Victoria averaged $572 per month while those for 2 bedroom apartments averaged $740.[20]

Proportion of Seniors

Approximately 90 percent of the units are occupied by seniors.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although the building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, in some ways it is suitable for aging tenants:

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- The bathroom is large enough to accommodate a wheelchair.
- There is a ramp at the entrance to the building;
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher

In other ways the building is less suitable:

[20] CMHC, 1997 Rental Market Report.

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- Access to the balconies is not possible in a wheelchair.

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building is managed by a local management company. The Resident Manager is a retired business executive who went into property management when retirement bored him. He clearly enjoys his job and his tenants, all of whom he knows well.

Senior tenants are preferred by the Manager and the owners, who are sensitive to the tenants' needs. For example, the carpet in the hallways is old and also old-fashioned, but the tenants like it so the Manager is trying to maintain for as long as he can. Similarly, a tenant on the main floor was disturbed by the fact that her unit was easily visible from the street, so a landscape designer was retained to increase her privacy through the use of vegetation.

The laundry room, often a focal point in senior-oriented buildings, is bright and clean. There is an ironing board, an easy chair, and a small library, which is replenished by the tenants. Tenants will often also meet and visit in the lobby, which is very attractive and comfortable.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

There are nine couples in the building; the rest of the senior tenants are women living alone. Three are in receipt of SAFER benefits, but the rest appear to have fairly good incomes.

Management Profile

The Resident Manager is a relative newcomer to the field of property management, being a retired marketing executive. However he has taken courses at the local community college and has earned his CPM. He enjoys the job very much and believes that his ability to get along with people helps enormously in his new field.

He is supposed to get 2 days off per week. He earns less than $30,000 per year and says "he isn't in it for the money."

Desirable Resources

In view of the fact that in his five years of experience the Property Manager has never faced a problem he has not been able to solve, he does not see the need for any external resources.

Case Study #16 Victoria

General Description and Location

Case Study #16 in Victoria is a 32 year old two building complex built around a very large and attractively landscaped park area containing lawn swings, umbrellas, and picnic tables. The buildings themselves, both of which are three storey structures, are externally quite attractive. They are well located for seniors – within one block of all necessary services. The buildings also appeal to students because of the proximity of the development to the University of Victoria. The combination of students and seniors has occasionally caused some difficulty for the property manager.

Building structure:

The building contains 208 units, 102 one bedroom units (approximately 750-800 square feet), and 106 two bedroom units (approximately 900-1,000 square feet). All units above the first floor have balconies. Although there were only three or four vacancies at the time the case study interview took place, the buildings experience much higher vacancy levels in the summer when many students move out. The Manager would much prefer to have no students at all, but cannot keep the buildings full without them.

Rents range from $625 to $675 per month for the one bedroom units to $800 to $810 per month for the two bedroom units. Heat, hot water and drapes are included in the rent, as is one secured parking spot.

Relative to the overall Victoria market these rents are quite high. In November 1997, rents for 1 bedroom apartments in Victoria averaged $572 per month while those for 2 bedroom apartments averaged $740.[21]

Proportion of Seniors

Approximately 75 to 80 percent of the units are occupied by seniors.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although the building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, in some ways it is suitable for aging tenants, as detailed below. Several of the current tenants are in wheelchairs.

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- The bathroom is large enough to accommodate a wheelchair;
- There is a ramp at the entrance to the building;

[21] CMHC, 1997 Rental Market Report.

- There are automatic doors at the entry which can be opened and closed with a remote control device;
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher;
- Some of the kitchens are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs;
- There is a very small lip between the unit and the balcony;
- Some bathrooms have grab bars.

In other ways the building is less suitable:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);
- The elevator would not accommodate a stretcher.
- Although some bathrooms do have grab bars, there is no backing behind the tiles and the owners worry about liability issues should a grab bar fail.

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building is popular with seniors, partly because of its appearance and location, and partly because there is a critical mass of seniors already living there who act as a magnet for other seniors.

As well as a party/recreational room, the building provides 2 pools, 2 whirlpools, and 2 saunas. Laundry is coin-operated in one central location.

Senior tenants are preferred by the Manager and the owners, although they have experienced several problems with tenants suffering from dementia .

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

There are "lots" of couples in the building; although 70 percent of the tenants are women living alone. A few are in receipt of SAFER benefits, but the rest appear to have fairly good incomes.

Management Profile

The company that owns the buildings also owns the management company that manages them. The Resident Manager has been working in the property management field for 5 years. There is also an Assistant Manager so that someone is available 24 hours per day 7 days per week.

Annual salary for the Manager is less than $30,000, an amount that does not include her monthly rent.

She has often experienced problems with tenants who are apparently no longer capable of living independently. Currently she has a tenant who can never remember how to use the enterphone so the managers are continuously called upon to let in the homecare workers and other visitors.

Desirable Resources

In terms of what would help her do her job more effectively, the Manager thought that training courses and a guide would be the most useful. Because of the experiences she has had dealing with tenants with dementia, she focused on that issue as the most important component of a guide.

Case Study #17 Victoria

General Description and Location

Case Study #17 in Victoria is a 23 year old 7 storey building located in the heart of James Bay, a neighborhood in central Victoria that is very popular with seniors because of its proximity to just about everything, including downtown. The building is part of a retail/office building complex that includes a major grocery store that provides a delivery service. The residential building is currently undergoing some upgrading, including the renovation of the lobby and the addition of a fitness centre.

Building structure:

The building contains 173 units, 12 small one bedroom units (approximately 400 square feet), 131 standard one bedroom units (500 to 711 square feet) and 30 two bedroom units (711-1,021 square feet). Eight of the units were vacant at the time the case study interview took place.

Rents range from $490 to $725 per month for the one bedroom units to $750 to $1,300 per month for the two bedroom units. Heat and hot water included in the rent. Parking is $25 extra.

Relative to the James Bay rental market, these rents are higher than average. In November 1997, rents for bachelor, one bedroom and two bedroom units in James Bay averaged $473 per month, $606 per month, and $804 per month respectively.[22]

Proportion of Seniors

Approximately 30 percent of the building's units are occupied by seniors.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although the building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, in some ways it is suitable for aging tenants, as detailed below.

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- The bathroom in some suites is large enough to accommodate a wheelchair;
- There is a ramp at the entrance to the building;
- There are automatic doors at the entry;
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher;
- The carpet is low pile in most units. Special carpet specifically designed for wheelchairs has been installed in some of the units;

[22] CMHC, 1997 Rental Market Report.

- Some bathrooms have grab bars, although for liability reasons tenants are asked to arrange installation of grab bars themselves.
- In some units, cupboards and closet rods have been lowered;
- The Resident Manager acts as responder for the Medi-alert system.

In other ways the building is less suitable:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets in most of the units are all at standard heights;
- Handles on doors and sinks are conventional (not levered);

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building is very popular with seniors, partly because of its location, partly because there is a critical mass of seniors already living there who act as a magnet for other seniors, and partly because the owners and managers of the building cater to senior tenants. As the Manager put it: "We go the extra mile for our senior tenants." The community in which the building is located, James Bay, also caters to its senior residents. There are many community services of special interest to seniors, and community businesses such as restaurants also make special provision for seniors.

In the building itself there is a rooftop garden where BBQ's and other social events are organized by the building's management. There is also an indoor heated pool and saunas. Laundry is coin-operated on each floor.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

A majority of senior tenants is over 75 and almost all are single women. There is one senior couple in the building. More than half the seniors are low income and several are in receipt of SAFER benefits. The Manager promotes SAFER.

Management Profile

The company that manages the building has been in business for almost 20 years. The Resident Manager has 14 years of experiences in property management, 4 of them with seniors. The manager gets 32 hours per week off and earns just over $30,000 per year. Rent is not included.

The Manager strives to find out what his tenants want. There is a Tenants' Action Committee that meets with him to set up different events.

Desirable Resources

Generally, the Manager's view is that after 6 months on the job, any property manager should have learned 90 percent of what they need to know.

Case Study #18 Victoria

General Description and Location

Case Study #18 in Victoria is a 30 year old 4 storey building located in the heart of James Bay, a neighborhood in central Victoria that is very popular with seniors because of its proximity to just about everything, including downtown. The building's new owners decided to make it an exclusively seniors' building in January, 1995, and it is now 95 percent seniors (over 55). The decision to turn it into a seniors' building was made on the basis of the owner's belief that seniors are more stable tenants than non-seniors. The entire building, inside and out, was refurbished. The landscaping is beautiful, complete with reflective pools and stone bridges.

Building structure:

The building contains 108 units, 6 bachelors (525 square feet), 78 one bedroom units (610 square feet), and 24 two bedroom units (856 square feet). There were no vacancies at the time the case study interview took place.

Rents range from $475 for the bachelor units, to $525-$595 per month for the one bedroom units, to $700 to $750 per month for the two bedroom units. Heat, hot water and surface parking are included in the rent.

Relative to the James Bay rental market, these rents are slightly lower than average. In November 1997, rents for bachelor, one bedroom and two bedroom units in James Bay averaged $473 per month, $606 per month, and $804 per month respectively.[23]

Proportion of Seniors

As indicated previously, 95 percent of the building's units are occupied by seniors and the other 5 percent will be as well as soon as tenant turnover permits.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although the building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, in some ways it is suitable for aging tenants, as detailed below.

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- The bathroom in some suites is large enough to accommodate a wheelchair;
- There are handrails in all the tub enclosures;
- All the tap handles have been replaced by lever handles;
- Carpet is low pile;
- There is a ramp at the entrance to the building;

[23] CMHC, 1997 Rental Market Report.

- There are automatic doors at the entry;
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher;
- There is scooter storage on the main floor.

In other ways the building is less suitable:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets in most of the units are all at standard heights;
- Access to the balcony is impossible in a wheelchair;

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building is very popular with seniors, partly because of its location, partly because it is quiet and there are no children around, and partly because management targets senior tenants and caters to them. The community in which the building is located, James Bay, also caters to its senior residents. There are many community services of special interest to seniors, and community businesses such as restaurants also make special provision for seniors.

Except for the very attractive landscaping, there are no public amenities. Laundry is coin-operated in one central location.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Most of the tenants are in their 70's and 80's, although "there are lots of really old ones." About three-quarters are women living alone, almost all of whom are low or middle income. Several are in receipt of SAFER benefits.

Management Profile

The company that manages the building has been in business for almost 20 years and manages many other buildings in Victoria. The Resident Manager has 14 years of experiences in property management and has his CPM designation. He belongs to the James Bay Association and likes to be actively involved in the community. His wife is a psychiatric nurse and is very helpful on occasion when the Manager must deal with a difficult tenant. The Manager "in theory" gets 2 days per week off, although he is always within cell phone range and he earns less than $30,000 per year. Rent is not included.

Desirable Resources

The Manager thought that most of the resources suggested would be somewhat helpful, although not of critical importance. He pointed out that property managers are not being paid to be caregivers, but that the need for this type of function was increasing all the time. As he put it "the writing is on the wall", by which he meant that conventional property management in buildings heavily populated with seniors is going to change dramatically as the population ages.

Case Study #19 Victoria

General Description and Location

Case Study #19 in Victoria is a 33 year old 14 storey building located in James Bay, a neighborhood in central Victoria that is very popular with seniors because of its proximity to just about everything, including downtown. The building, which is very close to a major seniors' centre, has the distinction of having the biggest outdoor pool in Victoria.

Building structure:

The building contains 73 units, 24 bachelors (386-405 square feet), 25 one bedroom units (782 square feet), and 24 two bedroom units (933 square feet). There was one vacant bachelor unit at the time the case study interview took place.

Rents range from $460 to $535 for the bachelor units, to $590-$725 per month for the one bedroom units, to $750 to $875 per month for the two bedroom units. Heat and hot water are included in the rent. Surface parking is $10 per month; $15 per month for carport parking.

Relative to the James Bay rental market, these rents are about average. In November 1997, rents for bachelor, one bedroom and two bedroom units in James Bay averaged $473 per month, $606 per month, and $804 per month respectively.[24]

Proportion of Seniors

More than 50 percent of the building's units are occupied by seniors.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Although the building was not originally planned with the needs of seniors in mind, in some ways it is suitable for aging tenants, as detailed below. Two tenants are in wheelchairs, in spite of the fact that bathroom doors, which are very narrow, are really too narrow to accommodate wheelchairs and the bathrooms themselves are very small.

- The doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters;
- Carpet is low pile;
- There is a ramp at the entrance to the building;
- There are automatic doors at the entry;
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher;

[24] CMHC, 1997 Rental Market Report.

In other ways the building is less suitable, in addition to the bathroom problem:

- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets in most of the units are all at standard heights;

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building is popular with seniors, notwithstanding the fact that it is by no means exclusively a seniors' building. Non-seniors in the building tend to be young professionals, who are not noisy or otherwise troublesome. The location is superb. Not only are the normal amenities nearby, the local seniors' centre is on the other side of the adjacent park. As indicated in other case studies, the community in which the building is located, James Bay, also caters to its senior residents.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Many of the senior tenants are in their 70's and 80's, although there are several in their 90's. Unlike many other case study buildings, only about half the senior tenants are women. Also unlike many other case study buildings, about 80 percent of the tenants are middle income. Some are in receipt of SAFER benefits.

Management Profile

The Managers (husband and wife) of this building are very involved in the community. They are members of a local group of property managers that regularly arranges for speakers to provide information and advice to managers on issues of common concern. The Resident Managers were in the real estate business in Victoria until three years ago, when they decided to become property managers, a job they evidently enjoy. Several of the elderly female tenants bake for the male half of the property management team and customarily refer to him as "Sweet William." For their part, the managers "do things' for their tenants, such as hosting a Christmas party.

Within the building, long term tenants have established an informal buddy system. The local grocery store delivers.

Desirable Resources

The Managers thought that by far the most important resource for any property manager dealing with seniors is the phone number of someone in a position to help with the issues that typically arise. The difficulty with a booklet or any other kind of printed guide is that they cost money to produce and they quickly become outdated.

Winnipeg Case Study #20

General Description and Location

Case Study #20 is a 27 storey, 36 year old high rise tower. It is part of a complex which includes a twin tower and a hotel. It is in the heart of downtown (south) Winnipeg and is connected by "skywalk", through the hotel, to the Winnipeg Convention Centre. The Convention Centre includes a floor of retail and service outlets. The case study building is also within one block of transit, the Winnipeg Public Library (main branch) and the Eaton Place shopping and office complex, home to numerous medical offices.

The building was not able to compete with newer area buildings constructed in the late 80's and was "taken back" by CMHC in 1992. Since that time, it has undergone common area upgrading and on-going suite carpet replacements. It is now owned by the firm that manages it.

Building structure:

The building contains 264 units; 120 bachelors, 120 one bedroom units and 24 two bedroom units. All units have balconies. Rents average $506 per month for the bachelors, $506 - 606 per month for one bedroom plans of varying sizes, and $804 per month for the 2 bedroom units, including all utilities, air conditioning and satellite TV. Underground parking is $70 per month reserved and $95 per month for scrambled day spots which are rented to persons working in local offices.

The overall vacancy rate was reported to be approximately 5% with five vacancies in each of the studio and one bedroom unit types plus three two bedroom vacancies.

Laundry is coin-operated in a central location.

There is no recreation room and no space dedicated to seniors. Tenants have access to the swimming pool and spa facilities in the adjacent hotel.

Although the building is in a very convenient location, the all-inclusive rents are low for a downtown high rise due to the influence of outdated design, older appliances and a lack of dishwashers.

Proportion of Seniors

About 30 percent of the units are occupied by senior tenants. The majority, approximately 60%, are between the ages of 65 and 75.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building was not planned with the needs of seniors in mind and is generally not suitable for aging tenants. With a few exceptions, the average age of senior tenants is not increasing because the building lacks amenities and programs to keep them active and happy as they grow older. Physical features that do accommodate aging in place are:

- There are no stairs at the secure entrance to the building
- Common area and suite doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs
- Corridors are brightly lit
- There are handrails in common areas and lever handles on the suite entry doors
- The elevators are large enough to accommodate a stretcher

In most ways the building is unsuitable:

- The bathrooms are not large enough to accommodate a wheelchair
- The only grab bars in the bathroom have been installed by tenants
- The carpet is not suitable for wheelchairs
- There are laundry facilities on only one floor
- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights
- Handles on in-suite doors and sinks are conventional
- Access to the balcony is not possible in a wheelchair
- The stairwells are not large enough to accommodate a stretcher

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The location convenience and affordable rents are the major attractions for seniors living in the building. The Manager reports that she goes out of her way to assist senior tenants with various issues. There are some very frail tenants in the building that are not capable of living without supervision who are waiting for openings in facilities with additional services.

The lower rents in this building contribute to a mix of approximately 30% low income and 60% middle income seniors. Some of the tenants are in receipt of SAFER benefits.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Most of the senior tenants, who are generally in good health, are over 65 and approximately 30% are over 75. Approximately 60% of them are women and 70% of them live alone. Very few of them drive.

Some of the tenants are receiving homemaker services but the Manager does not know if they are being provided by government Home Care or private sector firms like We Care. She feels that management should be informed by government agencies about the conditions of senior tenants so that they can be better served and monitored.

Management Profile

W.R.E. is the owner and manager of several buildings in Winnipeg that they have purchased in the last 5 years. The Management claims to actively seek seniors as tenants because they are quiet and stable. However, the site manager finds them to be demanding tenants that are difficult to find time for in such a large building.

The Manager lives on-site in addition to a caretaker and someone is on-call for emergencies 24 hours per day. A record of disabilities is maintained for the fire department only and there is an unofficial buddy system in place between neighbors.

The site staff and the Senior Property Manager do not have any formal training in property management or in issues associated with aging but they all have a great deal of experience in managing buildings with high concentrations of senior tenants.

The property managers have occasionally faced the problem of dealing with senior tenants who become incapable of living independently but have never served a notice to vacate. In most cases, tenants are moved to care homes with the help of Continuing Care staff.

Desirable Resources

The Manager views most of the suggested initiatives as important or very important but does not feel that training courses in aging issues are warranted. Better communication with government support agencies and suggestions on how to relocate senior tenants to a place that is more suitable to their needs would be very welcome.

Winnipeg Case Study #21

General Description and Location

Case Study #21 is a 14 storey, 20 year old high rise tower. It is located in west St. James just off Portage Avenue, near Grace Hospital and the Deer Lodge Centre seniors care facilities where concentrations of elderly seniors are very high. There are numerous services available within a few blocks on Portage Avenue. The Glendale and St. Charles Country Clubs are also located nearby.

Generally, most of the apartment buildings with elevators in this area are substantially occupied by seniors.

Building structure:

The building contains 211 units; 12 bachelors, 41 one bedroom units, 12 one bedroom and dens plus 115 two bedroom units. All units have balconies and in-suite storage. Rents average $471 per month for the bachelors, $606 per month for one bedroom plans and $661 for both 1 bedroom/den and 2 bedroom units. A seniors discount of $30 per month is provided.

Tenants must pay heat and electricity which is on a guaranteed rate plan at $50 per month for 1 bedrooms and $60 for larger units. Management is considering eliminating this program as they pay the balance and bills are coming in very high. Reserved surface parking for one car is included and is $25 per month for each additional car.

The overall vacancy rate was reported to be approximately 5% with all of the six vacancies in the one bedroom unit.

Laundry is coin-operated in a central location and there is no communal building storage.

There is a recreation room but no additional amenities or seniors programs.

Proportion of Seniors

About 90 percent of the units are occupied by senior tenants. The majority, approximately 70%, are over the age of 75.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building was not planned with the needs of seniors in mind and is generally not suitable for aging tenants. The average age of senior tenants is very old and there are few features to assist them. Physical features that do accommodate aging in place are:

- There are no stairs and there is an automated door at the secure building entry

- Common area and suite doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs
- Grab bars are being installed by the manager as required
- Corridors are brightly lit
- There are handrails in common areas
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher

In most ways the building is unsuitable:

- The bathrooms are not large enough to accommodate a wheelchair
- The carpet is not suitable for wheelchairs
- There are laundry facilities on only one floor
- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights
- Handles on suite doors and sinks are conventional
- Access to the balcony is not possible in a wheelchair

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The location convenience, unit design, easy access and large balconies are the major attractions for seniors at this property. The Resident Manager couple have been at the building for a long time and "cater above and beyond" to the needs of senior tenants. There are some very frail tenants that are not capable of managing on their own.

There is a mix of approximately 30% high income and 60% middle income seniors at Westwood Estates. None of the tenants are in receipt of SAFER benefits.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Most of the senior tenants, who are generally in good health, are over 75 and none are under 65. Approximately 65% of them are women and approximately the same number live alone. Approximately 60% of them drive and have lived in the building for under 10 years. The situation is reported "to change quickly" and when it does, senior tenants usually go to care facilities.

Management Profile

W.R.E. is the owner and manager of several buildings in Winnipeg that they have purchased in the last 5 years. The Management claims to actively seek seniors as tenants because they are quiet/stable and live in the building on a long term basis.

Someone is on-call for emergencies 24 hours per day. A record of disabilities is maintained for the fire department and there is an unofficial buddy system in place between neighbors. Management also checks on frail tenants.

The site staff and the Senior Property Manager do not have any formal training in property management or in issues associated with aging but they all have a great deal of experience in managing buildings with high concentrations of senior tenants.

The property managers have faced the problem of dealing with senior tenants who become incapable of living independently due to both physical and mental problems. In the case of mental incompetence, a notice to vacate was issued and arbitration was required. In most cases, tenants are moved to care homes in cooperation with Continuing Care staff.

Desirable Resources

The Manager views most of the suggested initiatives as important or very important but does not feel that training courses in aging issues or an association for managers are needed. The senior property manager was the interviewee for this building. He feels that more community resources and government agencies that take legal responsibility for incompetent seniors are required.

Winnipeg Case Study #22

General Description and Location

Case Study #22 is a 376 unit apartment complex of five interconnected buildings, all with elevators. Three of the buildings are three storeys in height and only one is wood frame construction. The remaining buildings are high rises of 13 and 20 storeys.

The case study building is part of the North Portage community which was built in the late 80's with tri-level government assistance as a downtown renewal project. Other buildings on the site include Kiwanis Chateau life lease apartments, Fred Douglas Place life lease apartments, the YM-YWCA state-of-the-art fitness complex and the Portage Place multi-level shopping mall. The residential buildings are all connected to each other and to Portage Place by a commercial mall at the base of the Place Promenade apartments or by "skywalk".

Initially, the Place Promenade Apartments were built and owned by a private sector developer. The project stalled at 70% occupancy due to security concerns about the location, competition from additional multiple family completions in the downtown area and an over-emphasis on marketing to seniors. The North Portage Development Corporation owns and leases the land to all of the buildings in the community and reclaimed the project from the developer. A marketing program with resident testimonials that emphasized the security systems, the lifestyle opportunity and recreation facilities with target marketing to those working downtown contributed to filling the complex within 6 months. Referral and renewal programs have maintained high occupancy levels since that time in a downtown market where vacancy levels have averaged between 6% and 10% (CMHC Rental Market Surveys).

The Fred Douglas Society plans to open a supportive housing residence of 28 self-contained apartments in the heritage section of the YM-YWCA within the next year. This facility is intended to assist aging residents in the life lease buildings and Place Promenade to remain in the community as an alternative to a personal care home in the suburbs.

Place Promenade was sold to its current owners, Cityscape Residents Corporation of Montreal, in the past month. They have discontinued the seniors discounts and one-time referral/renewal bonus of $100.

Building structure:

There are 10 suite types dominated by a two bedroom "twin master" plan with equal size bedrooms and two full baths that is popular with senior couples. There are also 41 small one bedrooms that were substantially vacant until they were marketed as "ultra spacious studios". In total, there are; 2 bachelors, 174 one bedroom units and 200 two bedroom units.

All units have balconies or ground floor patios. Rents average $525 per month for the bachelors and (small 1 bedroom) "studios", $635 per month for one bedroom plans, and $725 per month for the 2 bedroom units, including heat and air conditioning. Tenants pay for their own lights and cable TV. Underground parking is $60 per month reserved.

The overall vacancy rate was reported to be approximately 1.5% with five one bedroom vacancies and just one two bedroom vacancy.

Laundry is coin-operated in a central location.

There is a recreation room with a kitchen and two additional lounges, one of which is dedicated to the seniors club. Additional amenities include an exercise/spa area and a seasonal swimming pool.

Proportion of Seniors

About 70 percent of the units are occupied by senior tenants. The two bedroom plans attract couples. Therefore, most of the seniors are between the ages of 55 and 70. Older seniors, just approximately 5% of the total community population, generally occupy the one bedrooms.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building was not planned to accommodate the changing needs of seniors but has many features that appeal to them, particularly the main floor grocery and services and the indoor access to Portage Place, medical offices, Eaton's/The Bay and many more shops/services beyond the immediate area. It is not unusual to see senior residents in scooters from Place Promenade in the "skywalk" system as far way from home as Winnipeg Square at the corner of Portage and Main, many blocks from Place Promenade. The average age of senior tenants is increasing because most of the seniors are the original tenants that moved in when the building opened in 1987. Physical features that accommodate aging in place are:

- Control card security system enhanced by manned patrols
- Mobility suites with hard fibre carpet and most of the additional features as listed in the survey required to accommodate wheelchairs
- There are no stairs at the secure entrance to the building or to any of the connected shopping areas. Even the YM-YWCA has ramps or lifts between levels.
- Common area and suite doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs
- Corridors are brightly lit
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher

Typical suites and some common area features are not suitable:

- The bathrooms are not large enough to accommodate a wheelchair

- Grab bars in the bathroom are restricted to mobility suites
- The carpet is not suitable for wheelchairs
- There are laundry facilities on only one floor
- Cupboards are all at standard heights, even in the mobility suites
- Handles on most doors and sinks are conventional
- Access to the balcony is not possible in a wheelchair
- None of the main doors to the buildings are automated. This is a flaw in a complex that attracts residents in wheelchairs to its mobility suites.

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The location convenience with indoor climate controlled access to amenities and services and seniors discounts with renewal and referral programs have been the main attractions to seniors. The Manager reports that the seniors are "livid" about the cancellation of the bonus programs.

Large suites and rents that have been at the top of the typical market have attracted more affluent seniors to this complex. Approximately 50% are categorized as middle income and 40% as high income. None of the tenants are in receipt of SAFER benefits.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Most of the senior tenants, who are generally in good health, were 55 - 65 when they moved in and are now over 65. Approximately 70% of them are women and 60% of them live alone. Most of them drive.

Some of the tenants are receiving homemaker services through government Home Care or private sector firms like We Care and maid service agencies. The health department has occasionally been involved in relocating senior residents.

Management Profile

Cityscape is the owner and manager of several buildings they have acquired recently in Winnipeg. The Management actively seeks seniors as tenants because they are stable long term residents that do not damage the premises and they pay rent on time. Advertising has been directed to them in seniors publications in the past. The new owners have not been advertising for seniors since they took over.

The Manager lives on-site in addition to a caretaker couple for each building. Someone is on-call for emergencies 24 hours per day. A record of disabilities is maintained for the fire department and management maintains notes on those with special disabilities (e.g. blind). There is an unofficial buddy system in place between senior neighbors, most of whom live in one of the high rise towers.

The site staff and the Senior Property Manager do not have any formal training in property management or in issues associated with aging.

The property managers have occasionally faced the problem of dealing with senior tenants who become incapable of living independently and have served a notice to vacate with the help of Manitoba Health staff. In most cases, tenants move to the life lease apartments in the community or to personal care homes when they cannot cope with obstacles such as the central laundry area.

Desirable Resources

The Manager views most of the suggested initiatives as very important but would not be interested in an association for managers of buildings with senior tenants. Information on what is most important to seniors and how to get a speedier response from government agencies were also suggested.

Winnipeg Case Study #23

General Description and Location

Case Study #23 is a quality brick-faced nine year old 8 storey high rise building. It is located on the Red River in an area where there are many services and mature neighbourhoods with a concentration of senior residents that have been selling their single family homes to move into maintenance-free apartments or condominiums.

A bus stop and medical clinic are located on Pembina Highway within one block of the building but the nearest grocery store is over a mile away.

The building was initially opened as a rental but has recently been substantially converted to owner-occupied condominiums. Just over 30% of the units are maintained on a rental basis. Condominium conversion is a trend that has removed large numbers of quality rental units in suburban locations from the Winnipeg rental market in the last few years.

Building structure:

The building contains 111 units - 36 are rented; 50 one bedroom units, 58 two bedroom units and 3 three bedrooms. All units have balconies. Rents average $660 per month for one bedroom, $800 per month for the 2 bedrooms and $900 for the 3 bedrooms, including air conditioning and satellite TV. Tenants pay for heat and electricity. Reserved surface parking is $40 per month but is currently being included for one car as a temporary discount.

The overall vacancy rate was reported to be 0%.

There are laundry hook-ups in each suite in addition to free communal laundry facilities on each floor, a recreation room, whirltub, sauna and exercise room.

Proportion of Seniors

About 45 percent of the units are occupied by seniors. Approximately 30% of the seniors are 55+, 50% are 65+ and 20% are 75+.

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building was generally not planned to accommodate the needs of seniors who are aging in place. The average age of seniors is increasing as they are almost 100% the original tenants that moved in 9 years ago but they are not yet very old or frail. Physical features that accommodate aging in place are:

- There are no stairs at the secure entrance to the building
- The entry doors are automated

- Common area and suite doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs
- Corridors are brightly lit
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher
- Grab bars are installed in the baths by management as needed
- The suites were designed with walk-in showers and the bath is large enough to accommodate a wheelchair

In many ways the building is unsuitable:

- The carpet is not suitable for wheelchairs
- Cupboards, light switches, and outlets are all at standard heights
- Handles on in-suite doors and sinks are conventional
- Access to the balcony is not possible in a wheelchair

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The riverside location and quality building/unit design are the major attractions for seniors at Pembina on the Red. The Manager reports that she takes the initiative in organizing dinners and games in the recreation room and provides assistance to those in wheelchairs. She would very much like to have mobility suites in the building. (She is familiar with the benefits of mobility suites from another community where she worked).

The high rents in this building contribute to a mix of approximately 60% middle income and 40% high income seniors. Nome of the tenants are in receipt of SAFER benefits.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Approximately 50% of the senior residents, who are generally in good health, are over 65 and approximately 30% are over 55. Just 20% are over 75. Approximately 60% of them are women and 60% of them live alone. Most of them drive and are described by the manager as "very active".

There are lots of caregivers "coming and going" in the building but the Manager does not know if they are government Home Care staff or private sector firms like We Care. There is also a lady that does a great deal of housekeeping in the building through word-of-mouth referrals. Many of the residents take advantage of the Safeway van service for grocery shopping.

Management Profile

Apex, the building manager, is a family-owned firm with a 50 year history in Winnipeg. The developer is now also the President of the management firm. The Management does not actively seek seniors as tenants because the building has been full with a waiting list for many years.

The Manager does not live on-site but someone is on-call for emergencies 24 hours per day. She does not maintain records on resident needs but an unofficial buddy system has been developed by the residents.

The site manager describes her qualifications to deal with issues of aging as "having a lot of patience" and prior experience in a large complex with many senior tenants. The Senior Property Manager (President) is an accountant with extensive development experience.

The property managers occasionally face the problem of dealing with senior tenants who become incapable of living independently. They "encourage" residents to relocate with the assistance of other residents, have never served a notice to vacate and have not referred anyone to Continuing Care. In most cases, senior residents ultimately move to care homes or hospitals.

Desirable Resources

The Manager views most of the suggested initiatives as very important with the exception of an association for managers of buildings with seniors and training courses in aging issues. She feels that it is very important to have "the right people on-site" to deal with seniors.

Winnipeg Case Study #24

General Description and Location

Case Study #24 is a twenty-eight year old, 222 unit high rise apartment building. Four of the units have been rented as offices and the head offices of the developer/ manager are located on the main floor. It is located on the river in "Osborne Village" just over the river from the Legislative buildings.

This area is very popular for its quiet residential character in combination with riverside views, a Safeway grocery store, quaint shops, unique restaurants and services, all within a block or two of Number One Evergreen and other large rental and condominium complexes. The downtown "skywalk" system can be accessed by crossing the nearby bridge and walking or busing a few short blocks to The Bay. The City's Riverwalk to The Forks Market can also be accessed by crossing the bridge. The Forks is currently being expanded to include many new cultural displays and activity centres in preparation for the 1999 Pan Am Games.

The neighbourhood appeal for seniors is enhanced by a new assisted living community in the immediate area and the Riverview Health Centre which is a 5 minute car ride away at the end of Morley off Osborne Street. There is a new personal care home and several hospitals for chronic care and rehabilitation, including a day hospital, on the Riverview campus.

Building structure:

The 218 large (1000 - 1200 SQ FT) residential apartments at Number One Evergreen are made up of 100 one bedroom units, 114 two bedroom units and 6 larger two bedroom penthouses. All units have balconies. Rents average $695 per month for one bedroom plans, $842 per month for the typical 2 bedroom units and $1800 for the penthouses, including central heat and air conditioning. Tenants pay for their own lights and cable TV. Underground reserved parking is $50 per month.

The overall vacancy rate was reported to be 0%. Quality buildings in Winnipeg generally have few vacancies. This is a well-established trend as verified by CMHC Rental Market Surveys. Most of the vacancies are located in older outdated buildings without amenities.

There are in-suite laundry hook-ups in addition to a central coin-operated laundry room.

There is no recreation room. Amenities are communal storage, an exercise room, indoor pool and sauna.

Proportion of Seniors

About 70 percent of the units are occupied by senior tenants. Approximately 20% are ages 55 - 65 and there is a 40% segment in both 65+ and 75+ age categories. Four of the tenants are 92 years of age!

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building was not planned to accommodate the changing needs of seniors but has many features that make the building comfortable for physically challenged tenants. The average age of seniors is increasing as they age in place. The manager estimates walkers at approximately 10 in number and there are "a few" (not seniors) wheelchairs. Physical features that accommodate aging in place are:

- Enterphone security system enhanced by manned patrols
- Two baths include a walk-in shower in the two bedroom units
- Grab bars installed by management as required
- Roll-out cabinet shelves in some suites
- Hardwood floors in most suites
- There is a ramp at the automated entrance to the building
- Common area and suite doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs
- Corridors are brightly lit
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher

Typical suites and some common area features are not suitable:

- The bathrooms are not large enough to accommodate a wheelchair
- There are laundry facilities on only one floor, for those who do not have appliances in their suites
- Cupboards are all at standard heights
- Handles on most doors and sinks are conventional
- Access to the balcony is not possible in a wheelchair

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

Large suites with two bathrooms in a riverside location and high rents have attracted more affluent seniors to this complex. The manager does not ask seniors for income information but does not believe that anyone would have a low income. None of the tenants are in receipt of SAFER benefits.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Most of the senior tenants (approximately 95%), who are generally in good health, have been living in the building for 10 to 20 years. Approximately 70% of them are women and 80% of them live alone. Most of them drive.

"Lots" of the tenants are receiving assistance through the government Home Care program.

Management Profile

The management company is a long term owner and manager of numerous commercial and residential buildings in Winnipeg. The Management does not actively seek seniors as tenants at Number One Evergreen Place because "they don't have to" - they hear about the building from friends who already live there.

The Manager does not live on-site but someone is on-call for emergencies 24 hours per day. The manager is not aware of any buddy system that the residents may be maintaining but she does keep records listing special needs and personally checks on those she has cause to be concerned about.

The Senior Property Manager has a CPM designation and the Site Manager that was interviewed is a Certified Health Care Aid..

Management has had to deal with many senior tenants that needed more services. They have never served a notice to vacate because the "families usually look after it" but they have made referrals to Continuing Care. Tenants relocate to care homes, hospitals or they pass away.

Desirable Resources

The Manager was not very enthusiastic about an association for managers or about most of the suggested content for a guide on dealing with aging tenants. However, she does rate training courses, awareness of community resources and publication of some type of guide as very important and stated that suggested initiatives were very well covered in the survey.

Winnipeg Case Study #25

General Description and Location

Case Study #25 is a quality brick-faced fourteen year old 10 storey high rise building. It is located just off Grant Avenue in River Heights, a mature neighbourhood with a concentration of senior residents that have sold their single family homes to move into maintenance-free apartments or condominiums.

The Grant Park Shopping Centre, Pan Am Pool and Reh-Fit Centre are located within one block of the building. The Grant Park shopping mall includes a grocery store, discount department store, medical offices on the second floor and several restaurants on the site.

Building structure:

There are 88 units in the building but the manager "has never counted them" due to low rates of turnover - all of them are rented and the unit types include one bedroom units, two bedroom units and two bedrooms with dens. All units have balconies. Rents average $660 per month for one bedroom, $800 per month for the 2 bedrooms and $990 for the two bedroom with additional den, including air conditioning. Tenants pay for cable TV, heat and electricity. Reserved surface parking is included for one care but is $35 per month for an additional stall.

There are coin operated laundry facilities on each floor and no additional amenities.

Proportion of Seniors

The manager said that all types of tenants are welcome and that they have a few families but 95% percent of the units are occupied by seniors that are all over the age of 70. Most are very elderly. The management company advertises a seniors discount which the manager did not discuss. She was careful to stress that "they do not discriminate".

Physical Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The building was not planned to accommodate the needs of seniors who are aging in place. The average age of seniors is increasing as "they don't move out" unless they are forced to by medical conditions. Building features that accommodate aging in place are:

- There is a ramp with hand rails at the secure entrance to the building
- Common area and suite doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs
- Corridors are brightly lit
- The elevators and stairwells are large enough to accommodate a stretcher
- The suites were designed with walk-in showers and the bath is large enough to accommodate a wheelchair
- There are 4 mobility units with most of the features listed in the survey

In many ways the building is unsuitable:

- Except in mobility units, the carpet is not suitable for wheelchairs
- Cupboards, without roll-out shelves, in all units and light switches/ outlets are at standard heights in typical suites
- Handles on in-suite doors and sinks are conventional in typical suites
- Access to the balcony is not possible in a wheelchair

Other Features of Relevance to Aging Tenants

The convenient location near the bus route and "off the main drag" that is "very, very, very quiet" are reported by the manager to be the main attractions for senior residents. The bus is very important to the 95% ratio of female widowed tenants that the manager estimates to make up 80% of the senior households. The Manager reported that there is dedicated recreation space and organized games for seniors. However, she also said that there is no recreation room and did not explain where these activities take place.

The manager is of the opinion that 90% of her tenants are high income seniors. None of the tenants are in receipt of SAFER benefits.

Characteristics of Senior Tenants

Approximately 95% of the senior residents, who are generally in good health, are over 70 and many are very elderly. Some of them drive.

This interviewee felt very strongly that the residents' inability to take care of themselves as they get older is none of her business and helping them is not her job. She believes that it is totally the responsibility of their families. When asked what happens when they don't have any, she said that they all do but that she would refer the matter to her head office in this case. She also stated several times that there are other places for seniors that can't cope or want more services and that Cambridge Gardens is an apartment building, not a care home.

Management Profile

The property management firm manages several upscale buildings in Winnipeg, many with large ratios of seniors including several new condominium developments in Linden Woods, a subdivision of large new homes south of Cambridge Gardens.

The Manager has lived on-site for 8 years and says she is on-call for emergencies 24 hours per day. She does not maintain records on seniors and is alerted by residents if someone is not seen around for a few days.

The manager has no qualifications to deal with issues of aging and is not interested in acquiring them. She does not know what qualifications the Senior Property Manager might have.

The resident manager occasionally faces the problem of dealing with senior tenants who become incapable of living independently. She "tells them to get help" when they become ill or frail and works with their family. She has never served a notice to vacate and has not referred anyone to Continuing Care. In most cases, senior residents pass away and some move to care homes.

Desirable Resources

The Manager is not interested in the suggested initiatives. When pressed to respond on the content of a guide, she agreed only that retrofit guidelines, information on community resources and legislation relative to seniors would be important content.

Abstract: Aging Tenants in the Private Rental Market

The objectives of this research project were four-fold: to conduct a review of the literature focused on aging tenants in the private rental market; to assess, via a series of case studies, the willingness and the capability of private landlords in selected centres (Vancouver, Victoria, and Winnipeg) to respond to the needs of their aging tenants; to identify and describe initiatives that have been undertaken in the private and public rental sectors across Canada to accommodate the needs of aging tenants; and to describe measures that may help landlords address the needs of aging tenants.